

GOSPEL RADIO

***A 20th-century tool
for a
20th-century challenge***

BARRY SIEDELL

Gospel Radio

by Barry C. Siedell



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Foreword

It requires faith and a vision from God to effectively use gospel radio. The one speaking into a cold microphone never sees or hears about most of the results from his radio program. If a person must see responses as he serves the Lord, he probably will not last long in a radio ministry.

The history of gospel radio is rich with men of vision who overcame great obstacles because of their faith in God. To appreciate present-day gospel broadcasting, we need to know the history of gospel radio. To know how effective gospel broadcasts can be, we need to know how God is using them to reach the world. This book will help you see both aspects. It will give you a greater appreciation for the gospel broadcasters of the past and for the potential of gospel radio in the future.

This book ably shows that everyone has *not* put his radio on the shelf, thus ending the day of radio. God is still accomplishing great things through gospel radio. He is using it to penetrate areas where other kinds of witness are not permitted. As one of the mass media, radio is having a vital part in fulfilling the Great Commission.

—Harold J. Berry
Literature Editor

Preface

The purpose of this book is threefold. First, it is to tell the story of the gospel broadcasting pioneers and what God has accomplished through these men who were faithful enough to move into the uncharted waters of radio. Next, the purpose of this book is to look at what is being done today at home and abroad in the field of gospel broadcasting. It is vital that Christians realize how effective radio is and can be in overcoming the problems facing personal evangelism today—and tomorrow. Then, in what is the most difficult task asked of this book, it looks to the future to see what problems the Church will be asked to overcome to fulfill its divinely set goal of worldwide evangelism.

This book is not intended to be an exhaustive history of gospel broadcasting, telling the story of each radio preacher who has made a contribution. It is impossible to mention them all. Neither does the book present all the answers to the future of gospel broadcasting. This is beyond the competency of the writer. What is hoped is that the description of the problems, along with the appraisal and opinions of leaders in gospel radio, will

suggest to the reader that in radio—and television—is the God-given potential for this generation to complete the task assigned the Church nearly 2000 years ago.

My thanks to the many broadcasting leaders who were kind enough to take the time to answer my questions and provide the data necessary for this book. Unless specifically footnoted or otherwise acknowledged, comments from these men were provided through news releases or through direct correspondence with the author.

—Barry C. Siedell

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Chapter 1

The Challenge

Nearly 2000 years ago when Jesus Christ issued His Great Commission, the population of the entire world was about 250 million—about the same as the current population of the Soviet Union. It wasn't until 1850, only 121 years ago, that there were 1 billion people living on the earth at the same time. As recently as 1921, the year of the first religious radio broadcast over a commercial station, there were not quite 2 billion people. Today there are well over 3 billion and, even though that mark was reached only in 1960, the population is growing at such a fantastic rate that we are just five or six years away from the time the 4 billion mark will be reached.

The Church of Jesus Christ faces, in the last three decades of the 20th century, serious and complicated obstacles to personal evangelism. The population explosion, for example, is a complex problem, because with it comes several satellite problems—how to provide food, shelter and a measure of human dignity to these masses. Another obstacle is Communism. A third of the

world's land area is under Red control and is inaccessible to a Christian witness of the traditional face-to-face variety. And dedicated as it is to fomenting class struggle and "wars of liberation," Communism may place more nations in subservience. Nationalism, rampant in both Asia and Africa, is not by definition opposed to the gospel witness as is the dialectical materialism of Communism. Unfortunately, however, nationalism often degenerates to the point of pitting race against race, nationality against nationality, and culture against culture.

Other more subtle obstacles, yet just as serious, plague the church in the United States. Religion is becoming irrelevant to the sophisticated American in his day-to-day life. An increased leisure—the three- and four-day weekend is just around the corner, and the 13-week vacation is actually here in certain industries—threatens to keep marginal churchgoers out on the lake and links on Sunday even more than now.

Have the events of the past half century caught God off balance? Is it now possible to show statistically that the Church cannot conceivably reach every single person now living, let alone those to come in the next 30 years as the world population climbs to 6 billion?

"The simple fact is," says the Rev. Abe G. Thiessen, executive director of International Christian Broadcasters, "that the Church of Jesus Christ is confronted with a gigantic task which seems all out of proportion to its committed resources."

Yet Christ has not rescinded the commission He gave His Church to “go . . . into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). “For this reason,” continues Thiessen, “God has placed at the disposal of the committed few the powerful tools of radio and television to multiply the effective witness of the Church.”

Christians should be concerned about the world and national problems, not just because they may encroach upon our own freedom, but because they hinder the Church’s effort to fulfill its mission.

The Church’s Mission

What, specifically, is the mission of the Church? Simply put, it is to take the gospel of salvation to every nation in the world; to bring individuals to a point of decision—either for or against Christ; and, after baptizing those who decide for Christ, to teach them so that they—as new members of the Body—can carry on the task of witnessing in their own communities. The most important biblical text relevant is Matthew 28, the inspired record of the resurrected Christ talking to His disciples. Beginning in verse 18 He said, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”

From this text it is clear that the Church’s mission does not end with the preaching of the

gospel; that is, simply telling a person about the plan of salvation. It is significant that in the Great Commission passage (Matt. 28:19) the word which is translated "teach" is the Greek word *matheteuo*, meaning "to make a disciple of" or "to instruct." The command is really to "disciple all nations." The crux of evangelism, then, is to so teach that the recipients will understand the message and be able to make a knowledgeable decision for or against Jesus Christ.

To say, for example, that no one should hear the gospel twice before everyone has heard it once is to oversimplify the Great Commission. Communication theorists tell us that it is altogether too easy for a man to hear but yet not comprehend. Noise or distraction of any kind may prevent him from hearing accurately. The churchgoer in the pew may be sitting next to a mother and her crying baby. Rather than hearing what the preacher is saying, he is thinking, Why doesn't she take that child out of here?

Atmospheric conditions can cause poor reception of a gospel message being broadcast over a radio. Or this "noise" may involve personal prejudice or presupposition that colors a man's thinking, making it impossible for him to understand what's being said. The Church's task to preach to every creature, then, actually means to tell each person the Good News in such a manner that he will understand. Whether or not he receives Christ as Saviour, he is evangelized when he is brought to the fork in the road where he is forced to make a decision.

The Great Commission, of course, is at the core of the biblical basis for evangelism on the part of

the Church. This commission is found in all four gospels, in one form or another, and in the Book of Acts.

The reason behind the commission is the second aspect of the biblical basis for evangelism. "There is salvation in no one else," reads Acts 4:12, "for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved" (*NASB*). The urgency of evangelizing the world, therefore, is simply that the Church of Jesus Christ possesses the message of the only way a man can receive eternal life. Put another way, we know the only way through which a man can escape eternal damnation. The need, therefore, demands urgency.

The third aspect of the biblical basis for evangelism is that of method. There is no one verse that can be pointed to as providing the model for evangelizing. Christ did not say specifically how this was to be done. Matthew 10:16 is relevant, however. Speaking to His disciples early in His ministry, He said, "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves."

While the immediate context of this statement is the sending out of the disciples to the people of Israel, certainly the underlying principle is valid in respect to present-day emissaries of the Church. Just what did our Lord mean by this mixed metaphor? The image of the sheep among the wolves mirrors a life-and-death struggle. The enemy of the truth is wily and deadly. Christ was saying that it is necessary for us to use our God-given intellects to fight the enemy effectively. The

enemy can be overcome through the Spirit-directed use of our capabilities—not through force.

The implication of this admonishment for the Church today is simply that God wants us to use our minds to develop means of going in among the enemy—the wolves—and effectively reaching souls for Christ. Should a thousand missionaries line up at Checkpoint Charlie and march into Communist-controlled East Berlin? That would be like sheep being sent into a pack of wolves. Much more wise it is to put our minds to the development of methods for reaching behind the Iron Curtain in such a manner that human life—or at least freedom—is not foolishly sacrificed. Modern technology is here to be used.

The dimensions of the command—that every creature be reached—demands, says Dr. Kenneth L. Chafin, associate professor of evangelism at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, that the Church call upon all its resources. The Church, in short, must adapt current technology to the evangelization task. “Those who make a diligent effort to bring together their knowledge of God with the age in which they live will be blessed for their efforts,” Chafin continues. “Twentieth-century man, buffeted about by the processes of urbanization and secularization, desperately needs Christ to be presented to him in a way he can understand and to which he can respond.”¹

With the nature of the Church’s mission in mind, then, what role do the electronic media—radio and television—play in this mission?

Purpose of Gospel Broadcasting

The purpose of gospel broadcasting is, in general, identical to that of the Church—to win people to Christ and then help them to mature spiritually. Radio, in fact, is a tool of the Church, perhaps the most powerful, to fulfill its mission of reaching the world.

Men have discovered the principles that govern the transmission and receiving of radio signals that God created with the universe. Man has developed systems of communications from these principles that allow him to communicate with his fellowman anywhere in the world instantaneously. So sophisticated are these systems that he can talk with moon-orbiting astronauts 250,000 miles from earth as if they were sitting next to him on a bus. He can watch them perform tasks in space as clearly as if they were performing in a TV studio in Burbank. He can watch, via live television transmission, man's first step onto the moon's surface. Sophisticated communications systems can—in fact, must—be adapted to the task of evangelism by Christians who think creatively.

There are, perhaps, five general evangelism tasks radio can perform. Of these, four are held in common with other methods of evangelization. The fifth, however, places radio at what should be a high-priority level in organized witnessing efforts. The five:

1. Radio can sow the seed of the gospel, making the first contact with people who are totally ignorant of the Christian message—whether in the United States or in Nepal.

2. Radio can repeat the life-giving Message until the listener is thoroughly acquainted with the claims of Christ. As we shall see in subsequent chapters, this does not mean that each gospel broadcaster must repeat the same message day in and day out. But if the listener has any program choice at all where he lives, he can hear the substance of the message from a number of gospel programs.

3. Radio can call for a decision on the part of the listener.

4. Radio can teach the new converts, firmly rooting them in sound doctrine. By strengthening the immature Christian, the witnessing effectiveness of the Church is increased.

5. Radio is not subject to geographical or political barriers, as are missionaries and evangelists. Virtually every man, woman and child is within reach of the gospel through the proper use of radio.

At first glance, an observer is tempted to say that God has ordained the development of radio at this particular time in history to deal with the seemingly prohibitive obstacles that face personal evangelism today. Communism has spread its control over a third of the surface and population of the world; the birth rate is far outstripping the death rate, creating a swelling population that will double within the next 30 years. Surely God foresaw these problems, the reasoning goes, and ordained that radio be invented to overcome them.

To be sure, God foreknew the problems that face us today. He also knew radio would be developed and ultimately needed in evangelizing

the world. But are the problems that face us today unique, making this the only time radio has been needed? As a matter of fact, the problems of the 20th century are basically the same as those facing the early church, though more complex. Totalitarianism, both secular and religious, made it difficult for the early Christians to witness. All but one of the apostles died a martyr's death. The exception—John—was living in exile at his death. Paul was continually harassed and eventually executed. Officials of first-century Palestinian Judaism sought diligently to stamp out this new cult founded on the shores of Galilee and brought to fruition on a hill outside Jerusalem. There were many millions more pagans in the Roman Empire than Christians. With travel the way it was—no cars, trains or jetliners—it was impossible for the small band of believers to bring the news to everyone in the Mediterranean—not to mention the rest of the world. While Western history was focused on the Mediterranean area at this time, highly developed civilizations in China and India were flourishing. Barbaric tribes in central and northern Europe were just beginning to stir. By the first century, too, civilizations were beginning to develop in North and South America, continents of which the first-century Christians had never heard. The simple fact is that the first-century Church was technologically incapable of reaching “every creature” in the world with the gospel. But, after all, theirs was the task of starting the mission, for Christ had commanded, “Both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8). The Church still hasn't reached the “uttermost part.”

But the point is this: the first-century Church could have benefited greatly by having access to radio. Perhaps Paul would not have had to take those long, painfully slow journeys on foot and the treacherous voyages if he could have preached over the radio. At least he could have made contact with these people so they wouldn't have stoned him when he showed up outside their gates proclaiming the Message. And perhaps he wouldn't have had to write those epistles, depending on slow messengers to make the delivery and the faithful circulation of the letters among the early Christians throughout the area. But for Paul and the first-century Church to have had access to radio would have been anachronistic—out of place within the cultural framework of the time. Civilization did not possess sufficient knowledge and capabilities to produce radio, and obviously it did not until the 20th century. The argument that God could have given radio to the apostles is valueless, for the fact is that God has chosen to limit Himself in this world to the Spirit-controlled capabilities of mankind. Though speaking from a humanistic perspective, the late President John F. Kennedy was not entirely inaccurate when he said that "... truly God's work on earth must be done by man."

The gospel, according to Dr. Chafin, "is the story of how God involved himself in history through his Son."² When God, in His sovereignty, left the task of winning souls to His kingdom to men, He knowingly limited Himself to what man—in the enabling power of the Spirit—is able to do. He could have chosen some other means to spread

the news of His plan of salvation, but He did not. "The command of Christ," Dr. Chafin says, "assumes that evangelism will be done in a context of history."³

God doesn't create a medium like radio and then hand it to His followers to use to evangelize the world. Rather, He waits patiently while finite man stumbles toward discovery of the medium and develops it. Then He moves upon His servants to make use of the tool that has been made available.

"The simple fact that media for mass communications are available to evangelical Christians is sobering," says Tom Bisset, "since Christian responsibility and accountability are proportionate to opportunity and capability."⁴

Until the 20th century it had been technologically impossible for the Church to reach every person in the world with the gospel. Today it is possible. In subsequent chapters we will see just how Christians are using radio to help in the mission of the Church. We will also look in detail at the major obstacles facing personal evangelism today and in the very near future.

1. Carl F. H. Henry and W. Stanley Mooneyham, eds., *One Race, One Gospel, One Task*, Vol. II; official reference volumes of the World Congress on Evangelism in Berlin, 1966 (Minneapolis: World Wide Publications, 1967), p. 29.

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Ibid.*

4. Tom Bissett, "Christian Broadcasting Philosophy," *International Christian Broadcasters Bulletin*, June 1968, p. 3.

Chapter 2

The Obstacles: Communism and Nationalism

One of the most apparent and widespread obstacles to personal evangelism is totalitarianism. Communism is, of course, the most powerful and the most widespread of the forms of totalitarianism existing today. The Iron and Bamboo Curtains have sealed off from the rest of mankind over 1 billion people—a third of the world's population—since the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. Since then some 15 countries have been taken over by the Communists—none by free election. One out of every four square miles of the earth's land surface is controlled by the Communists and is therefore inaccessible to personal Christian witness from the outside. And most of these countries restrict or ban their own citizens from public witness.

“The Communist world is determined to prevent all Christians from ‘outside’ [from] crossing its borders to evangelize its peoples,” Dr. Arthur F. Glasser told the World Congress on Evangelism in

Berlin in 1966. The Overseas Missionary Fellowship official says, "Here is no minor issue. One third of the world's population is involved. Never has the Church faced so baffling a problem—at least, not since the rise of Islam in the seventh century."¹

What are the specific obstacles that Communism presents to evangelism? According to Dr. Helen Kim, president emeritus of Ewha Woman's University in Seoul and roving ambassador for the Republic of Korea until her death in 1970, these obstacles are:

1. "Lack of contact with the outside world because of the iron and bamboo curtains."² Barbed wire, stone walls, and machine gun-armed border guards represent the physical definition of the ideological barriers between the Free World and Communist states.

2. "Indoctrination with Communist ideology so that Christian beliefs are educated away."³ People who were nominal Christians before their country fell to the Communists find they can get along without religion. While they may have been at least sympathetic to Christians before, now they become militant anti-Christians.

3. "The use of fear to confiscate personal freedom so that people cannot learn about basic world facts; people are drilled in the idea that individuals exist only for the state and not for themselves."⁴ Brute force, culminating in the liquidation of opposition—or suspected opposition—groups has made an impression on the people. Their freedom has been revoked by the systematic use of fear—the people know that if they speak against the govern-

ment or about anything that the government opposes, like Christianity, they will be arrested or persecuted in other ways.

4. "The use of tyranny that makes people dependent on and expendable to the state."⁵

5. "Direct suppression of religion, or the use of it as a propaganda device."⁶ In some Communist countries a few churches are allowed to remain open in the larger cities as a demonstration of the peoples' "freedom of religion," while organized suppression is carried on throughout the rest of the country.

6. "The subversion of young people all over the world who have no real knowledge of Communism."⁷ The young of emerging nations are particularly susceptible to Communist influence as the triumphs and supposed triumphs of Marxist dogma in certain areas such as literacy, employment and industrialization are given as evidence that Communism can make a young, backward nation into a world power.

Samuel Escobar, staff member of International Fellowship of Evangelical Students and traveling secretary for Inter-Varsity Fellowship in Argentina, explains, "Totalitarianism creates an anti-Christian ideological atmosphere. All means of mass communication and persuasion are used to indoctrinate people in the essentials of the official ideology. Christianity is attacked both in its doctrine and in its practical application and usually has no way of defending itself. Thus, ideological barriers are established in the minds of the citizens and they become closed to the Gospel."⁸ Attacks are made on the Church over radio and through official

periodicals, and these attacks go unchallenged for the simple reason that Christian spokesmen are not allowed access to media outlets. People who hear only one side of the story eventually begin to believe what is being told them. To the emerging dark-skinned nations of Africa and Asia who are developing their own sense of national and racial pride, Communist propaganda pictures Christianity as a "white man's religion." Furthermore, propaganda reminds these people that the Church has ridden the coattails of the colonizing Western powers for the past 500 years. This fact is not lost on the natives.

Consequently, the Communist threat to Christian witness is not limited to territorial obstruction. That one out of every three people living today is under Red domination is in itself a tragedy. Perhaps more dangerous because of its relative subtlety, however, is Red propaganda efforts in the newly emerging nations of Asia and Africa. Underdeveloped and usually possessing smaller populations, these new countries comprise the middle ground in the ideological warfare between East and West.

"While the white races are in relative political decline," says Fife and Glasser in their *Missions in Crisis*, "the nonwhite races are emerging from a formerly passive to an increasingly dominant role on an unprecedented scale. This generation, threatened as it is by communism, must be evangelized Say what one will, the Communists everywhere are capitalizing on the unalleviated hunger of the poverty-stricken and, for many centuries, widely exploited peoples of the earth. They are

seeking with impressive devotion to share, or sometimes more accurately to impose their own peculiar brand of political and economic hope. If they succeed it will be virtually impossible to prevent a worldwide upsurge of resentment toward the Church, which has had such a privileged place in the static social structures of the past.”⁹

What is Communist strategy today? Simply stated, and to the best knowledge of veteran Kremlinologists and sinologists, the strategy seems to be to take advantage of every chance they get to embarrass the United States and its allies and to encourage class warfare and wars of liberation and revolution that will tie down the West militarily—in general, doing everything within their power to add to the burdens of the Free World.¹⁰ On the other hand, it seems they will not risk direct confrontation that could lead to nuclear war.

Of course, Communism is not the only form of totalitarianism in existence today that threatens missions activities, though certainly it is the most feared and the most powerful. “We can consider as totalitarian any state which having assumed the whole political and technical control of a nation, seeks also to rule the mind and conscience of its citizens to gain their absolute loyalty,” Escobar says. “The most dangerous totalitarianism is that whose ideology becomes an official religion (state religion) and opposes any doctrine or teaching that does not conform to it.”¹¹ Among nations outside the Communist sphere that can be considered totalitarian are Haiti under Duvalier and Spain under Franco.

To what extent is there a Church in Communist nations? Briefly, the reported condition of the Church in some of the leading Red nations:

Russia: The number of believers in Russia was reduced by 50 percent from 1918 to 1960, leaving an estimated 30 percent of the population. The numbers have been cut by direct persecution, even death, and indirect means such as making people afraid to go to church and to witness for Christ. Even so, Arthur Glasser reports: "They number between five and six thousand congregations, and are multiplying more rapidly in industrial districts than in rural areas."¹² Representatives of the Slavic Gospel Association have traveled throughout the Soviet Union, visiting churches wherever possible. The Rev. Andrew Semenchuk, director of the Russian Bible Institute in Buenos Aires, Argentina, returned from a three-week visit to Russia in August 1968 about the time of the invasion of Czechoslovakia. "The Christian church is allowed to exist," he said. "Although the state tolerates the church, it does not encourage it. The church has never been accepted but has always been treated as an outcast. The state religion in the past has persecuted and exiled leaders. For the last 50 years the church has existed in an atheistic society which at least tolerates it, but is always antagonistic and openly speaks against it."

China: The effective, widespread missionary activity in China came to an end in 1949 as Mao Tse-tung's Communist party grabbed control of the world's most populous country. According to Gadiel T. Isidro, of Far Eastern Gospel Crusades in the Philippines, the Church, "though under con-

stant surveillance and subject to terrific pressure from the government, gallantly carried on a modified form of Christian witness until 1958, when the introduction of the People's Communes dealt a body blow to organized religion."¹³ The Protestant community numbers an estimated 70,000, which is 0.1 percent of the population. According to Dr. Kim, "Though a church is in existence it has been forced into a nationalistic mold. . . . The few churches that remain are in metropolitan centers and are showpieces for the Communists and their propaganda to indicate that freedom of religion is allowed."¹⁴

North Korea: In this militaristic state, the Christian church simply does not exist. According to Su-Kun Lee, former vice-chairman of the North Korean government news agency who made a break for freedom in 1967, no churches have been allowed to function in the country since the Korean War.¹⁵ More specifically, said Dr. Kim, Christians have been the target of severe and thorough persecution north of the 38th parallel. "Between 1959 and 1960 seven thousand party leaders carried on a concentrated program of examination and censorship of all the people," she stated. "In this process three million persons were liquidated, including all Christians."¹⁶

Closely associated with the problem of Communism is that of nationalism. The reason for this association is simple—Communist strategists and propagandists try to make use of this nationalistic development to further their own cause. This problem is large, involving about a third of the human race. Since World War II, more than 1

billion people have gained their political independence from the former colonial powers. Sixty new nations have been formed, and 50 more wait in the wings—some patiently, most very impatiently—for their nationhood.

From the outset we should make it clear that there is nothing inherent in nationalism that forces it to be anti-Christian. In fact, not all nationalistic governments have been antagonistic toward the gospel. The American Revolution had its roots in nationalism, as colonists, tired of being treated as second-class citizens, rebelled against the Crown. But what, specifically, is nationalism?

According to historian Boyd C. Shafer, nationalism includes these aspects: “(1) the love of a common soil, race, language, or historical culture, (2) a desire for the political independence, security, and prestige of the nation, (3) a mystical devotion to a vague, sometimes even supernatural, social organism which, known as the nation or *Volk*, is more than the sum of its parts, (4) the dogma that the individual lives exclusively for the nation with the corollary that the nation is an end in itself, or (5) the doctrine that the nation (the nationalist’s own) is or should be dominant if not supreme among other nations and should take aggressive action to this end.”¹⁷

Explaining that nationalism did not really exist in its fullest meaning until the French Revolution, Shafer summarizes four major forces that “made the nation the supreme community and nationalism the supreme sentiment: (1) the desire to unify and success in unifying territory and people, (2) the extension of the power of the nation-state,

(3) the growth of and increasing awareness of national cultures, (4) the power conflicts between the nations which further stimulated national feeling.”¹⁸

“When the dictators arose in the twentieth century they denied men both liberty and effective voice in government,” Shafer writes. “They did *not* deprive them of the sense of belonging to the nation. Rather just the opposite. Their success arose in large part out of the shrewd use of symbols and propoganda through which they identified themselves, the nation, and the people.”¹⁹

Shafer’s definition of nationalism applies particularly to that of established power states, like Germany of the 1930s and Russia of the 1940s and ’50s. The nationalism of the ’60s was somewhat different, though based on many of the same principles. The difference between the nationalism of Kenya, for example, and that of Hitler’s Germany is this: Hitler strove to instill a sense of racial superiority, dominance and invincibility in his fellow Aryans who already possessed a nation of their own; Kenya’s nationalism is based on a desire to be independent and to be treated as equals in the community of nations—self-assertiveness, in other words. This, of course, is not in itself bad. In Kenya the Christian witness continues, often with the favor of the government of Jomo Kenyatta, the “George Washington” of his country.

The Rev. Alfred Larson, Congo field leader for Unevangelized Fields Mission, writes that “in the tensions and conflicts of today’s world, the nationalist can easily lose his sense of logic and propor-

tion. Racial pride and a warped sense of cultural superiority can transform his patriotism into something fiercely self-assertive, what Toynbee calls 'the worship of collective human power within local limits.' As such it easily becomes the mortal enemy of the supra-national loyalty of the Christian Church."²⁰

Fife and Glasser point out another aspect, however, to the emergence of these nationalistic movements: "The self-expressive type of nationalism, by its very tendency to drift toward aggressiveness, is an expression of a sense of inferiority and insecurity. This aggressiveness in turn leads ambitious leaders to exploit people's fears to create national blocs along either historical and/or racial lines—e.g., the Pan-Arab and Pan-African movements. [Self-expressive nationalism] represents the struggles of minority cultures and races to maintain their separateness and distinctiveness in a world that is moving toward cultural unity and the deculturalized anonymity of modern mass society. These minority groups have been endlessly buffeted down through the years, and as the pawns of powerful states they have experienced an accumulation of frustration. Would they never become free in order to 'be themselves'?"²¹

Augustine G. Jebaraj, a bishop for the Church of India, speaking to the 1966 World Congress on Evangelism in Berlin, said, "Political nationalism becomes the greatest foe of evangelism when it is anti-international in its outlook and activities. Nations should have friendly relationships with one another. They must work not only for their own welfare, but also for that of other nations."²²

“Abundance has become the possession of the many rather than the privilege of the few,” write Fife and Glasser. “It is not fully appreciated at home that the Church has had no small part in precipitating this ferment by means of its missionary outreach. She has brought literacy and education to many parts of the world. She has taught the importance and dignity of the individual. She has planted the seeds not merely of personal and spiritual revolution through Christ, but also of social and economic revolution.

“At the same time this ferment has generated bitterness. ‘Why,’ these people ask, ‘should the average American be so wealthy when we are all so poor? . . . Why is it that, while the white, Christian nations ruled over us, they did not make serious efforts to raise the general economic level of our society?’ Today the world’s awakened peoples are demanding immediate and radical changes in their social systems.”²³

It is also in this area that Communists, or any other anti-Christian force, can claim, with considerable truth and effectiveness, that colonialism and Christianity worked hand-in-glove to conquer the peoples of Africa and Asia. The reason 19th-century missionary activity was so widespread was because as the flag of a colonial power—Great Britain, for example—advanced on the African and Asian continents, the flag of the Church went also, and with the approval of the colonial governments. Missions activities were highly beneficial from a cultural, as well as spiritual, standpoint. Many current African leaders are products of mission schools, where they gained their early education.

Unfortunately, as the fever of nationalism began to sweep across the savannas, anything associated with the former colonial masters came to be regarded as highly suspect and was generally to be shunned. The Church of Jesus Christ has shared in this downgrading and rejection.

“Since the Christian movement is above national cultures, it must be divorced in the minds of the as yet totally uncommitted from all identification with the political East-West struggle of our times. In its appeal to the man in the street, the gospel must not be obscured by political or sociological overtones which awaken prejudices and close hearts.”²⁴

The resurgence of the great ethnic religions—Buddhism, Islam and Hinduism—has paralleled the upswing of nationalistic sentiments in the past few years. The unfortunate association of the church with the colonial powers in the minds of all too many nationalists has led to the attitude that to be Christian in these former colonies is to be loyal to the imperialist white man—not to the young, emerging nation.

Ceylon furnishes a good example. Prior to its independence from Great Britain in 1948, the Ceylonese were not encouraged to use their own native tongue nor to continue in their own traditional cultures. Christianity, of course, was introduced to the island by missionaries from a conquering Western nation—Great Britain. According to Benjamin E. Fernando, the director of the YMCA and president of the Gideons in Colombo, Ceylon, traditional Ceylonese language and culture was “preserved with great difficulty by the

Buddhist priests. It was thus felt that to be a true Ceylonese one had to be a Buddhist. At most, Christians were second class citizens.”²⁵

“[Buddhism] teaches that Christianity has miserably failed, as evidenced by two world wars and the Korean and Viet Nam conflicts,” says the Rev. Phy Hoang Le, former general secretary of The Evangelical Church of Vietnam. “Buddhists believe—and teach—that before Christian nations blow up the world, Buddhism must intervene and restore peace. By presenting Buddhism as a force for world peace, Buddhists possess a most effective propaganda weapon. . . . In its missionary efforts,” continues Le, “Buddhism can count on the sympathy of most Asian governments. Some governments actively support it, in particular Bhutan, Ceylon, Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, and Laos.”²⁶

In the eyes of radical nationalists in many emerging nations with strong ethnic religions, any countryman claiming to be a Christian is a traitor. It follows, therefore, that to be a missionary in one of these lands is difficult, if not impossible. Some countries ban missionaries—Burma and Afghanistan, for example. In Afghanistan profession of faith in Christ is punishable by death. To what extent this is prosecuted is not known, but the law remains on the books.

India has placed restrictions on foreign missionaries, though exceptions are made concerning those who can help ease the nation’s educational or health needs. And the Church is unhindered by government interference, though overzealous and intensely nationalistic Hindus and Muslims occasionally harass Christians.

To sum up, Communist-controlled areas of the world—representing a fourth of the planet's land surface—are for all practical purposes off limits to personal missionary or evangelistic endeavor. Countries dominated by a strongly nationalistic mood also threaten to restrict the witness of the Church for reasons based mainly on bias and hatred stored up from the days of colonialism. With much of the non-Western world falling under either Communism or nationalism, traditional missionary activity has been severely hindered to a very large extent in the "non-Christian" world. And the trend is one of expanding anti-Church, so in all probability more nations will be seeking to limit missionary activity in the near future. An alternative for reaching people in these areas is therefore imperative.

1. Henry and Mooneyham, *One Race, One Gospel, One Task*, p. 298.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 292.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*, p. 289.
9. Eric S. Fife and Arthur F. Glasser, *Missions in Crisis* (Chicago: Inter-Varsity Press, 1961), pp. 62, 67.
10. "Russia's Strategy in Today's World—the View From Europe," *U.S. News & World Report*, November 27, 1967, pp. 101, 102.
11. Henry and Mooneyham, *One Race, One Gospel, One Task*, p. 288.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 299.
13. Harold Lindsell, ed., *The Church's Worldwide Mission: on the proceedings of the Congress on the Church's*

- Worldwide Mission, April 9-16, 1966, Wheaton (Ill.) College (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1966), p. 263.
14. Henry and Mooneyham, *One Race, One Gospel, One Task*, p. 298.
 15. "News From Around the World," *International Christian Broadcasters Bulletin*, December 1967, p. 10.
 16. Henry and Mooneyham, *One Race, One Gospel, One Task*, p. 292.
 17. Boyd C. Shafer, *Nationalism: Myth and Reality* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1955), p. 6.
 18. *Ibid.*, pp. 167, 168.
 19. *Ibid.*, p. 198.
 20. Lindsell, *Church's Worldwide Mission*, pp. 207, 208.
 21. Fife and Glasser, *Missions in Crisis*, p. 46.
 22. Henry and Mooneyham, *One Race, One Gospel, One Task*, p. 310.
 23. Fife and Glasser, *Missions in Crisis*, p. 21.
 24. *Ibid.*, p. 68.
 25. Henry and Mooneyham, *One Race, One Gospel, One Task*, p. 337.
 26. Lindsell, *Church's Worldwide Mission*, pp. 259, 260.

Chapter 3

The Obstacles: Population Explosion and Secularism

About 350,000 new souls began life on this planet today. Only about 165,000 left this planet for good. That is a net of about 185,000 people added to the population of the world today. Approximately the same number was added yesterday, and the same will be added tomorrow and the day after. But the number gradually increases as the base population increases and cures for previously incurable ailments are found. In 1900 about 40,000 a day were added to world totals.

Unfortunately, the countries least able to provide for the populations they now have are the ones with the largest shares in each day's population increase. India, with a population of over three-quarters of a billion, has an annual gain of 2.2 percent each year, not terribly large compared to some other countries. But with its enormous base population, 2.2 percent amounts to adding a population each year to India greater than Sweden's entire population.¹

In the late '60s, about 250 families were moving into Bangkok every day. And in Central America, where nations are notably poor, the population was growing at a staggering pace. In Tegucigalpa, the capital city of Honduras, an emergency loan provided \$1 million for home construction for 4300 people, but the city was growing by 6000 each year.²

Seventy years ago there were 11 cities in the world with populations over 1 million. Today there are over 100, with China leading the list with 15 million-plus cities.

“Perhaps the most surprising fact of all,” write Fife and Glasser in *Missions in Crisis*, “is that the largest proportion of city dwellers in the world (in cities of 20,000 and over) is found in Asia—33.8 percent as compared with Europe’s 27.5 percent and North America’s 13.9 percent.”³

The reasons for this superheated population growth are simple: more people are having more babies—3.5 billion people are going to have more children than 1 billion people—and the death rate has been progressively reduced. Medical science has won the battle of widespread epidemics of malaria, smallpox, cholera, yellow fever and typhus—all scourges that periodically ravaged continents in earlier centuries. In Ceylon, for example, as Philip Appleman points out, deaths from malaria were reduced almost by half in three short years; cholera, now existing only in restricted parts of Asia, killed only 12,800 in 1960, compared to 130,000 just ten years earlier. Using a U.N. publication as his source, he says, “There has not been a major pandemic . . . since 1919, when influenza caused 25 million deaths around the world.”⁴

While the population explosion is a tragic burden to underdeveloped countries, the United States is experiencing the same growth. James W. Rouse, the mortgage banker and developer of experimental Columbia, Maryland, says, "The population of the New York metropolitan area will increase by 6 million in the next 20 years. San Francisco will double."⁵ At a meeting of experts at the University of Puerto Rico, Greek city builder Constantinos A. Doxiadis said that "cities will grow until the whole earth, except for a few inhospitable or scenic spots, will be urban. "There will be one universal city or 'Ecumenopolis,' that will be almost incomprehensible to its inhabitants. It may be a city that will 'destroy man and lead him to his end as a biological, or at least as a civilized, individual.' "

If strong population control measures were passed today by the United Nations, according to Doxiadis, it would take a generation to make them effective worldwide. By then he estimates that the world's population would be about 12 billion. Since this type of control is not probable, the world's population will continue to grow, he says, until it reaches a leveling-off point—somewhere between 30 and 50 billion.⁶

What does all of this mean to the evangelical? The answer is clear. There are not enough missionary workers today to reach the 3.5 billion now living, let alone the 4 billion expected by 1975 and the 6 billion by 2000. Not only is the number of missionaries in most agencies and denominations not increasing, in many it is actually declining.

"Throughout the non-Western world, where the Church is weakest and smallest," writes Arthur

Glasser, "the multiplication of non-Christians will increase the fastest. By 2000 the world will have moved significantly toward total urbanization. Misery will have increased more than affluence, resentment more than understanding."⁷ More missionaries, not less, are obviously called for. Clearly, mass evangelism is the only way the Church will be able to fulfill its commitment to reach the world for Christ. Addressing the Western Chapter of the National Religious Broadcasters in Los Angeles in September 1966, Arnold E. Johnson, president of the Arnold E. Johnson Associates, Inc., said:

"Certainly, the advent of radio was not mere chance. No, neither the invention itself nor its timing. Can there be any doubt that God clearly saw the events of the future, the upcoming obstacles of preaching the gospel on the historically conventional basis, especially as it relates to world missions? Moreover, He foreknew the imponderables of the runaway population explosion currently bewildering our greatest thinkers."

While church membership in the U.S. is at an all-time high, managing somehow to keep pace with the population growth, weekly church attendance is down. Many churches with thousand-plus memberships minister to 100 or so in Sunday morning worship services, while the balance of those on their membership roles play golf, rake their yards or head for the beach.

"The daily grind at the office is killing," says one young businessman, "so when the weekend finally comes, I want to take my family to the lake for some fun and relaxation. We just want to get away from it all."

Getting back for church Sunday morning is out of the question for this family. It may have taken most of Saturday morning to reach the lake. And Sunday morning is the shank of this weekly mini-vacation. Most Christians, of course, make it a point to get back for Sunday worship at their home churches or visit a Bible-believing church in their vacation area if too far from home. But non-Christians—even those who occasionally attend church—are not inclined to interrupt their holidays or cut them short.

With the three-day weekend apparently closer than we realize, evangelicals might hope that this pattern will change, with Friday and Saturday set aside for play and Sunday once again becoming a day for worship. We would like to think that the unsaved could have their fun and still get back in time for services Sunday morning, but we'd be fooling ourselves, of course—three relaxing days in the sun are better than two. The people who are now spending two days at the beach or on the golf course will soon be spending three days pursuing leisure activities. Evangelicals must face the fact that they are mostly talking to themselves every Sunday morning. Unbelievers seldom come to the church, so the church must go to them. Radio is one way to reach them.

People take their radios with them on weekly quests for recreation—and they listen to them. What they hear is a mixture of pop music and commercials. And it is the commercials that are significant here—advertisers pay premium prices to reach these Americans busy at play with messages for hair coloring, diet soft drinks and cars. Carl F. H.

Henry, founder and former editor of the evangelical fortnightly magazine *Christianity Today*, writes that “today radio and television are gaining global importance; as never before electronic and mass media techniques exert a massive materialistic influence on people practically everywhere.”⁸ If the country’s producers of goods and services find it worthwhile to broadcast messages to these people, should not the church be willing to pay premium prices to communicate the gospel message over this medium?

Automation, of course, is the hero—or culprit—of this increase in leisure enjoyed by the average American breadwinner. While today’s industry workers are on the job an average of 20 to 25 hours a week less than their fathers or grandfathers a half century ago, they are producing six times more. The blessings of automation are not un-mixed. It was causing, by the late 1960s, the elimination of about 50,000 jobs a week, according to Labor Department figures.

Paralleling the rise of leisure is the rise of secularism. The trend is toward eliminating all elements of religion from public life and, in many cases, private life. The merits of recent Supreme Court rulings governing prayer in public schools and Christmas and Easter observances can be debated; but what can’t be argued is the effect of secularization that is caused by such decisions. Madalyn Murray O’Hair objects to astronauts reading Scripture and praying as they circle the moon. While Christians feel that religion is primarily a private affair, they feel uneasy in the presence of attempts to strip recognition of God from any part in public observances.

This trend toward secularization will increase, according to Dr. D. Elton Trueblood, eminent Quaker philosopher and professor-at-large at Earlham College, Richmond, Indiana. "The last third of the 20th century will, I believe, present a radical change in regard to secularization of our society," he writes. "In the recent past, there have been a great many people in the life of the West who are secularists at heart but have been ashamed to admit their true position. The solution for these has been mild religion. They have been afraid to oppose the love and worship of God, even though they have been convinced that the very idea of God is obsolete. Mild religion has seemed to be an innocuous middle ground: one ostensibly is not against the historic Christian faith but also avoids any clear or definite commitment to Christ."⁹

The change Dr. Trueblood sees is a growing openness to declare oneself free of religion. "I expect committed Christians to be, by the end of the century, a conscious minority, surrounded by a militant and arrogant paganism, which is the logical development of our secularist trend."¹⁰

In other words, while evangelical Christians are in the minority now, enough have claimed to be Christians so we have thought we were living in a Christian society. But as religion becomes more unpopular, or people feel greater freedom to reveal what they really have believed all along, then Christians will be well aware that they stand virtually alone. While it's not always easy to buy radio and TV time for gospel programs now, it may well get tougher as station owners and managers find themselves no longer forced to provide time for religious programming.

But this secularist trend, “freeing” man from his “primitive” dependence on religion, may be related to certain problems, particularly in the areas of mental health. During the first half of the 1960s, the number of psychiatrists, psychologists and related mental health workers rose 44 percent. And youngsters were being admitted to mental hospitals in numbers seven times their share of the total population.¹¹

Dr. Stanley F. Yolles, a former director of the National Institute of Mental Health, said that “population movement and the increased pressures of a speeded-up society undoubtedly are causing an increasing amount of emotional disturbance. . . . The pace of cities, and the crowding, get them—people feel ‘locked in.’ ”¹²

With these gloomy pictures before us, it is hard to think of this great era of leisure and materialism and man’s declared freedom from religion as the pinnacle of civilization. Clearly, 20th-century man needs more than color TV, a house in the suburbs and a 35-hour work week.

Assuming that the rapid rate of population growth around the world will indeed make it next to impossible for traditional missionary and evangelistic effort to reach the billions, mass evangelism is the only solution. But what kind of mass evangelism?

There are three alternatives: large-scale crusades, literature, and the electronic media. All three, of course, have proved very effective and have been used by God to reach millions. All have inherent weaknesses too, for methods of men cannot be perfect. And God has chosen to limit

Himself to the capabilities of men. Though led by Him, these methods are still limited by men's weaknesses.

Large crusades can draw hundreds of thousands of people, but these efforts, by necessity, are limited to relatively large population centers, or at least to areas served by modern, accessible means of transportation. In most underdeveloped or emerging nations, such systems of transportation do not exist or are inadequate. People living just a few miles from a large city may find it impossible to make it to town once a month for shopping, let alone several days for a crusade. Furthermore, once the crusade is over, there still remains the task of follow-up, which requires a large number of trained personnel to teach or plenty of Bible-centered churches into which new converts can be channeled. In some areas this is possible, but in many more areas—again we think of the underdeveloped or emerging nations—such personnel and churches are not available in the numbers required.

Perhaps the most serious drawback of crusade-type efforts is that they assume ability to enter a given country to conduct such meetings. This, of course, is next to impossible in a growing number of countries, most notable being the Communist-controlled nations.

The second alternative method of mass evangelism is literature. In *Missions in Crisis*, authors Fife and Glasser flatly state that “not only is literature an ideal form of reaching individuals, it is the only effective means of meeting the challenge of world population growth. . . . No form lends itself more readily to cheap mass production and distribution than gospel tracts. . . . It can be said of any form of

Christian literature that it can be made to speak clearly, directly, and without the negative impressions created by a foreign accent and foreign idiom."13

Properly written and edited, this is true, assuming copy is free of foreign syntax, thought patterns or sentence structure. A big plus for literature is that it can be read over and over again, either by one person trying to understand it better, or by another person being exposed to the message of Christ for the first time. The spoken word of a crusade—and radio, for that matter—is heard once. Its comprehension is not immediate, its meaning is lost—possibly forever.

On the debit side of literature, however, are several important points. For a gospel tract to be able to communicate the Good News, a person must take the time and effort to read it. It is also impossible to be sure just how many pieces of literature are actually being read. Furthermore, a literature ministry demands direct access to a country, whether it be personally handing out tracts in a marketplace, distributing them door to door, or even dropping them from airplanes. As with crusades, such access is limited in many countries, if not totally impossible, for political reasons.

The most serious problem facing literature ministries is that, above all else, such ministries must assume the people can read. According to mass communications expert Wilbur Schramm, in 7 percent of all African countries and 70 percent of all Asian countries, more than half the people cannot read and write.¹⁴ Fife and Glasser, in 1961,

noted that India's literacy rate was 25 percent—one out of every four Indians could read.¹⁵ Though up 10 percent over a period of a relatively few years, literacy efforts must be quickened just to keep pace with the mushrooming population of that land.

In other countries the literacy rate has actually dropped. In *The Silent Explosion*, Appleman points out that in Venezuela, despite heavy investment in school facilities, the national literacy level has dropped from 57 percent to 51 percent since World War II. He says further that "education is legally compulsory in Thailand, in India, in Egypt, and in Turkey, but in none of these places can this law be enforced, because exploding populations have created such masses of children that there are neither teachers nor classrooms enough to go around."¹⁶

Generally, however, the literacy rate is going up slowly worldwide. But when substantial numbers of people in a given country cannot read—as is the case in Asia and Africa—literature cannot be considered the prime means of mass evangelism.

Boosting literature as the "absolute number one priority in all missionary planning," the Rev. T. E. Lloyd, home secretary of the Africa Inland Mission, says that the conditions in Africa are favorable to literature produced in the specific countries by missionaries and nationals. Pointing out that it is already harder to get printed material into these same countries from outside, he urges priority for publishing Christian material on the fields now while this is still possible.

"Christian literature is today's absolute number one priority," he says. "Without for one moment

deprecating the proven value of radio, this [radio] can be carried on from outside the country, as is being done today.”

Mr. Lloyd put his finger on the value of radio as the basis for mass evangelism.¹⁷ Christian broadcasts do not have to be beamed to an audience from within a target area. Shortwave broadcasting makes it possible for a high-powered station high in the Andes Mountains in Ecuador to broadcast the gospel virtually around the world. Where possible, of course, local Christian stations—or Christian broadcasters using the facilities of commercial or government stations—can beam programs to small segments of a given country. Politics cannot keep radio waves out of a country. All powerful missionary radio ministries report success in reaching behind the Iron and Bamboo Curtains.

Radio, of course, has drawbacks too. Hostile countries can attempt to jam incoming signals. Russia and China have tried this occasionally, though the process is time-consuming, expensive, and just as fallible as a dozing monitoring engineer in a jamming station outside Moscow or Kiev. Atmospheric conditions may limit good reception from time to time. And, just like the literature men who cannot be sure how many people actually read the tracts, broadcasters cannot be sure if anybody is listening at any given moment.

1. Philip Appleman, *The Silent Explosion* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1965), p. 6.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 13.

3. Fife and Glasser, *Missions in Crisis*, p. 175.

4. Appleman, *Silent Explosion*, p. 8.

5. "Can Today's Big Cities Survive?" *U.S. News & World Report*, November 6, 1967, p. 55.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 54.
7. "Sighting the Final Third of the Twentieth Century," *Christianity Today*, January 20, 1967, p. 4.
8. Carl F. H. Henry, *Evangelicals at the Brink of Crisis* (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1967), p. 44.
9. "Sighting the Final Third of the Twentieth Century," p. 7.
10. *Ibid.*
11. "Now 200 Million Americans," *U.S. News & World Report*, November 6, 1967, p. 48.
12. *Ibid.*
13. Fife and Glasser, *Missions in Crisis*, pp. 216, 218.
14. Wilbur Schramm, *Mass Media and National Development* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press; Paris: UNESCO, 1964), p. 109.
15. Fife and Glasser, *Missions in Crisis*, p. 216.
16. Appleman, *Silent Explosion*, p. 14.
17. Fife and Glasser, *Missions in Crisis*, p. 216.

Chapter 4

Radio—The Early Days

The day was surprisingly sunny for December in icy Newfoundland. The sun, shining brightly in the washed-out blue sky, made it seem a little warmer than it really was.

Outside St. John's, the only city of any size on the island off the northeast coast of Canada, a young Italian experimenter paced back and forth among his strange arrangement of wires. About 500 feet above the site, and buffeted by strong Arctic winds, flew a kite holding up a copper wire antenna.

At the same time, 1800 miles away in Poldhu, England, the Italian's assistant prepared to tap out a telegraph message over a similarly strange-looking setup. Then, at a predetermined time, the assistant quickly punched the key three times. Instantly, Guglielmo Marconi, listening intently near his receiving device on the rugged Newfoundland coast, heard three distinct impulses—Morse code for the letter S. This was the first transatlantic broadcast in history and came on December 12, 1901, just

six short years after Marconi had successfully transmitted sound through the air at his father's estate near Bologna, Italy.

Marconi's feat of transmitting sound without wires capped about three decades of earnest research on the part of many notable scientists searching for a means of long-distance, wireless communication.

Interest in what was to become broadcasting actually got started about 20 years before Marconi's experiments, soon after Alexander Graham Bell unveiled his invention of the telephone in 1876. Bell himself used the phone—which differs from radio broadcasting in that the electronic messages are sent directly by wire from transmitter to receiver—in demonstrations of his invention. Interestingly, he always included music in his program. In one of these demonstrations in 1876, Evangelist Dwight L. Moody delivered a sermon and Ira Sankey sang a hymn—no doubt the first religious service delivered in one location and heard at another.

Not all observers were anxious for a worldwide system of communication. A cartoonist for the New York *Daily Graphic* depicted in the March 15, 1877 issue what he termed the "terror" of the telephone. His cartoon showed a wild-eyed speaker in front of a microphone being heard by groups of people all over the world.

While most of the excitement in communication in the last third of the 19th century was centered on the potential of the telephone, scientists became increasingly interested in the possibilities of wireless communication.

James Clerk Maxwell, a physicist and mathematician at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, outlined in 1867 his theory of the existence and characteristics of what he called "ether waves." It was his belief that radio waves were caused by some impulse sending a wave through this "ether," much like a rock being thrown into a quiet pool of water. He compared the ether to the pool. When an impulse created waves in the ether—like a rock hitting water—a wave would move from the source of the disturbance outward. If any receiving mechanism were in the way of the wave, it would be acted upon, like a bobbing cork would react to a ripple in the pool of water.

In the early days of research, this theoretical "ether" was a common conception of whatever it was that light, heat and sound waves passed through. It was defined as "an imponderable, electric medium supposed to pervade all space as well as the interior of solid bodies; an invisible, odorless, tasteless substance assumed to exist, through which light, heat, and radio waves could be transmitted."¹ This was still the accepted theory at the time of Marconi's historical sound transmissions at the turn of the century and was, in fact, still in vogue through the early years of actual radio broadcasting. It wasn't until 1922 that Charles Proteus Steinmetz, noted electrical engineer, declared, "There are no ether waves; radio and light waves are merely properties of an alternating electromagnetic field of force which extends through space."²

The next major step after Maxwell's theoretical work in the quest for radio was taken by Heinrich

Rudolph Hertz, a German physicist who set about to confirm Maxwell's theory of "ether." During the course of his research he became the first to create, detect and measure electromagnetic waves. He also found that there was a very close relationship between these waves and light, observing that the speed of electromagnetic impulses was the same as that of light—186,000 miles a second.

Then came Marconi. Still in his teens, he was vacationing in the Alps in the summer of 1894 when he came upon an electrical journal, *Wiedemann's Annalen*. It featured an article telling how Hertz had created and radiated electromagnetic waves, measuring some in meters—long—and some in centimeters—ultrashort. Why not use these waves for signaling? he thought to himself. So he cut his holiday short to return home to work. He set up a crude system of wires, coils and antennas on his father's estate. His dependence on predecessors in his experiment is illustrated by this description of his equipment:

"Wireless at that stage in 1894 was an electrical jigsaw puzzle. Marconi put together an induction coil, the Hertz wave emitter, the Righi spark-gap, a telegraph key, batteries and a Branly coherer. And he hoped that the combination might enable him to send and receive signals across his father's estate."³ His efforts paid off the next year when, from three-quarters of a mile across the family compound, he heard cricketlike sounds, signaling, in effect, the beginning of wireless communication.

"From a boy I was always interested in physics and in electric phenomena generally," wrote Marconi in later years, "and in the summer of 1894 I

read of the experiments and results of Hertz in Germany. I was also acquainted with the works of Lord Kelvin and with the theoretical doctrines of Clerk Maxwell. I experimented with electrical waves, as I considered that line of research very interesting. During these tests or experiments I thought that these waves, if produced in a somewhat different manner—that is, if they could be made more powerful, and if receivers could be made more reliable, would be applicable for telegraphing across space to great distances.”⁴

Contacting Italian government officials about his discovery, he was told that probably the only use for the wireless telegraph would be for seagoing vessels; therefore, he was urged to go to Great Britain, the mightiest naval power in the world at the time. He did and was successful in obtaining a patent in 1896 for his discovery. Between that time and his successful transatlantic transmission five years later, he developed a tuning device to do away with interference that could be caused by several stations operating in the same area. This circuit tuner was patented in 1900.

Following Marconi in the procession of contributors to the development of radio was Lee De Forest, the son of a preacher in Council Bluffs, Iowa. In 1906 De Forest invented the three-element electron tube which he called the audion, which opened the door to modern telecommunications. The experimental work of Reginald A. Fessenden became well known about 1905. While Marconi was concentrating on the wireless transmission of telegraphlike signals, Fessenden—a Canadian—was interested in voice transmission. But

to accomplish this he insisted that the wave sent out must not be an interrupted wave or series of bursts like Marconi's but a continuous wave upon which the human voice would be superimposed as variations and modulations. This heretical deviation from Marconi's principles eventually became the foundation of radio. By 1901 Fessenden had succeeded in superimposing a voice on such a wave. But to really perfect this system he needed an alternating current generator. He was able to convince General Electric to reluctantly assign a Swedish-born engineer to help him build this alternator. Finally the needed equipment was installed in Fessenden's laboratory at Brant Rock, Massachusetts.

On Christmas Eve, 1906, Fessenden, known as "the American Marconi," tested his facilities with what was probably the first religion-oriented wireless broadcast. From his facilities in Brant Rock, he broadcast a Christmas Eve program featuring himself on the violin, playing "O Holy Night." He sang a few bars of another song, then read a Scripture portion from the Gospel of Luke. Then a woman's voice, on a phonograph recording, sang Handel's "Largo." Finally, Fessenden wished his audience a Merry Christmas. His audience consisted of many, very surprised ship operators off the Virginia coast. Imagine the surprise of these toughened sailors, far from home, as the first human voices emanated from their earphones. An early book on radio records the event:

"... a human voice coming from their instruments—someone speaking! Then a woman's voice rose in song. It was uncanny! Many of them

called their officers to come and listen; soon the wireless rooms were crowded. Next someone was heard reading a poem. Then there was a violin solo; then a man made a speech, and they could catch most of the words.”⁵

Once the technique of broadcasting the human voice and music had become, thanks to Fessenden, more or less perfected, many experimental radio stations began springing up around the country. (No federal restrictions had been instituted yet, so anyone could take to the air.) One of the more interesting of these early experimenters was “Doc” Herold, a proprietor of a San Jose, California, engineering school. Herold began his station in 1909 in conjunction with his school, and students maintained a more or less regular schedule of broadcasting music to the rather limited area that could pick up the station.

It was during this time that the practical uses of the wireless were being tested—by tragedy. On January 23, 1909, a passenger ship, the S.S. *Republic*, collided with an Italian freighter off Nantucket, Rhode Island. Because of the speed with which rescue ships were able to answer the wireless call for help, only two of the 461 passengers on the *Republic* were lost, and only four seamen from the freighter died.

But the most dramatic test occurred about three years later in April 1912, when the legendary S.S. *Titanic*, on her maiden voyage, rammed an iceberg in the North Atlantic. While 1517 died, another 712 were saved because of the calls of distress that had been answered. Actually, the inquiry into the accident showed that had the

earliest distress calls from the *Titanic* been believed, most, if not all, passengers could have been rescued. A sidelight to this story is that a radio operator at the Marconi station atop Wanamaker's store in New York, named David Sarnoff, received wireless reports from the rescuing ship, the *Carpathia*. President Taft ordered all other stations off the air to eliminate interference. Sarnoff, who became one of the giants in broadcasting as chairman of the board of RCA, had the privilege of reporting one of the biggest stories of the early part of the century over his station.

By 1912, radio still had not given much evidence of its eventual role in modern society. After 16 years of experimentation, the commercial value of the wireless, as it was called, consisted primarily of supplying communications services—especially for shipping.

Though there were 1224 amateur radio operators in 1912, outnumbering ship-to-shore stations combined, the Radio Act of that year failed to recognize their rights. For the first time, however, a license was required to use the airwaves. Nearly 1000 transmitters already in use at the time were licensed in the days immediately following the passage of the Act. Included were transmitters operated by several colleges, universities and schools with several years of experimentation behind them.

Commercial progress in broadcasting was stalled during World War I as government agencies controlled nearly all transmitters. By 1917, when war made this federalization necessary, over 8500 licenses were held by amateur experimenters. Many

of these were professional or semiprofessional radio men who paved the way for later commercial development. In New Rochelle, New York, for example, 2ZK began broadcasting music on a regular basis in 1916.

From the technical standpoint, however, important steps were made during the war years that would make the rapid popularization of radio during the early '20s possible. Shortly after the war, the crystal set was offered to the public.

War regulations were lifted in 1919, and radio stations reverted to individual operators. One of these was KOW, operated by the Second Baptist Church of San Jose, California. The church had bought the station of "Doc" Herold. In a short time the church sold KOW to a commercial operator, though it retained the right to broadcast each Sunday for 20 years.

One amateur, Westinghouse engineer Frank Conrad, was operating a station—8XK—in connection with his work at the corporation's East Pittsburgh plant. By 1920 he had established a pattern of transmitting recorded music, sports results and other information on a fairly regular schedule at the request of other amateurs around the country.

Recognizing the possibilities of radio for publicity and sales, Westinghouse officials authorized Conrad to build more powerful equipment. Target date was November 2, 1920, presidential election day. By phone the company applied for and received on October 27 a commercial broadcasting license—the first such license issued in the United States—and was assigned the call letters "KDKA." A few nights

later the East Pittsburgh station went on the air to tell the nation it had elected Warren G. Harding.

Two months later, on January 2, 1921, KDKA scored another first, broadcasting a church service from Pittsburgh's Calvary Episcopal Church. Robed station engineers, one Jewish and one Catholic, manned the radio equipment as the Rev. Lewis B. Whittemore delivered the first sermon to be broadcast by a commercially licensed station.

Through 1921 and into early 1922 other attempts at broadcasting religious services were made, often with interesting reaction from the press. *Literary Digest* said of the trend: "Preaching by wireless is more than a passing fad, for already, we are assured, it has proved entirely practicable for a man to sit at home—even, for that matter, to lie abed if he is so disposed—and hear to the minutest detail all that his ears could gather if he were actually present at the services. More than this, with the aid of a wireless outfit the preacher can reach those who are unable to go to church and, we are told, it may prove to be an invaluable adjunct to the evangelist who would preach to an audience greater than the church roof can cover. The wireless telephone is now in use in both Pittsburgh and New York, according to several religious journals, and the reading of Scripture, the pastoral prayer, the music of organ and choir, and every accent of the sermon are carried to the telephonic ear of every listener who owns a wireless equipment and can adjust it to the proper wave length."⁶

A report of a Roman Catholic broadcast was commented on in the same issue: "Two Paulis

Fathers who were conducting missionary services in Old St. Patrick's in Pittsburgh [over radio] reached twenty states . . . and resulted in bringing in several converts to the Catholic Church. . . . 'Non-Catholics in cities 400 miles away wrote in for literature bearing upon the doctrines of the church.' ”⁷ The priests invited listeners to send in questions by mail or telegraph to be answered on the wireless the next night.

“Does the wireless telephone mean, then,” asked *Literary Digest*, “that the Christian congregation will eventually disappear?”⁸ Its answer—No. Quoting *The Continent*, a Presbyterian publication, the literary magazine said:

“To hear the most eloquent of sermons and the most melodious of music ‘in absentia’ will not fulfil to any soul conscious of its spiritual needs the ministry of the congregation of the house of God. . . . In the long run, therefore, neither the wireless telephone nor any other device of man will dispossess the habit of the religious-minded to gather together for united prayer and praise—for congregated waiting upon God. And the result in the end may well be the crowding of churches with new and larger throngs.”

Concluding that the conventional church services would indeed endure, the article then said:

“Those who have not been churchgoers, as they ‘listen in’ on services of worship, will be taken with a new curiosity to see and share the visible setting of all that they hear, while those who may temporarily abstain from attendance upon church with the idea that they can receive at home all which church attendance has formerly given them,

will discover the lack of something so vital that a new hunger for God's house will soon draw them thither again."⁹

1. Orrin E. Dunlap, Jr., *Communications in Space: From Marconi to Man on the Moon* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), p. 1.
2. Article by Steinmetz in *Popular Radio*, July 1922, as quoted in *Communications in Space: From Marconi to Man on the Moon*, p. 2.
3. Dunlap, *Communications in Space: From Marconi to Man on the Moon*, p. 6.
4. Testimony in the injunction suit of the Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company of America against the National Electric Signaling Company in the United States District Court, Brooklyn, N.Y., 1913, as quoted in *Communications in Space: From Marconi to Man on the Moon*, p. 7.
5. Harlow, *Old Wires and New Wires*, p. 455, as quoted by Erik Barnouw, *A Tower in Babel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 20.
6. "The Gospel by Wireless," *Literary Digest*, February 4, 1922, p. 32.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*
9. *The Continent*, as quoted by *Literary Digest*, February 4, 1922, p. 32.

Chapter 5

Gospel Trailblazers (I)

Sharp forks of lightning flashed across the mid-summer night's sky. Window-rattling thunder responded from the banks of black clouds, turned an ominous purple and brown by the constant lightning barrage.

Inside a Methodist church in Jackson, Michigan, an evangelist stood before a crude radio microphone, struggling to be heard above the storm. It was his first try at preaching the gospel over the radio.

John Zoller

Thirty-six miles away in Ann Arbor, the owner of one of the first crystal sets scanned the broadcast spectrum hoping to pick up WWJ, the first commercial station in Michigan. Through the snapping and crackling of the troubled atmosphere, he could just barely make out the voice of Evangelist John E. Zoller.

“This is my first radio broadcast,” Mr. Zoller said, “and I know the weather is such that it may be hard for you to listen, but if there is a backslider out there, or an unsaved person who accepts Christ as his personal Saviour tonight, will you write and let me know?”

It seemed rather doubtful that even those at the meeting in person had heard much of the message that stormy July night in 1922. Four days later, however, the Methodist preacher got a letter from the man in Ann Arbor.

“It was hard for me to hear you because of the storm,” he wrote, “but I accepted the Lord Jesus as my Saviour.”

“When I read this letter,” Mr. Zoller says, “at once I asked God to open the door so I could broadcast the gospel.”

And in the early '20s God did open the door, not only for John Zoller, but also for many other men who realized the potential radio had for evangelizing the world. This, then, is the story of God's vanguards of radio evangelism—the pioneers of gospel broadcasting—who blazed the trail for the gospel across this new frontier opened by scientific discovery and development.

Paul Rader

One warm day in June 1922, the phone rang in Paul Rader's Chicago Gospel Tabernacle office. Mayor William H. Thompson was on the other end. He was also the operator of WHT, one of Chicago's first stations with studios atop the City Hall Building in the downtown Loop.

“As one of the first stations in town,” Dr. Clarence Jones says, “WHT was a toy—a gimmick for publicity for the mayor, but to Paul Rader it was God’s gift to the unchurched.”

An ex-prizefighter, Rader didn’t often shy from a new challenge. On June 17, 1922, Rader took a brass quartet, including Clarence Jones (later cofounder of HCJB), up to Mayor Thompson’s penthouse radio studio. The studio was an open-air affair with unfinished pinboards put together in sort of a “sentry box” appearance with a hole cut in one side.

“You just get ready and point your instruments at the hole there in the side of the box,” a technician instructed the mystified musicians, “and when I say ‘play,’ you play.”

“Play,” said a voice, and out of the hole appeared an old telephone microphone. The quartet played and Rader preached. With encouraging listener response from this initial effort, Rader was quick to use other Chicago-area stations—WJJD, WGN, WBBM, WLS—to broadcast the gospel message whenever the chance presented itself in the next five years.

By 1928, network broadcasting had come into its own, with NBC organized into two semi-independent “Red” and “Blue” networks. The Columbia Broadcasting System also began operations that year, and by 1930 the “Breakfast Brigade” with Paul Rader and his Tabernacle musicians filled an hour each morning coast-to-coast on CBS.

But that wasn’t all of Rader’s radio activity. WBBM didn’t broadcast on Sunday at that time.

This gave Rader an idea. He arranged with the station and the Federal Radio Commission to use the idle transmitters for 14 hours each Sunday. Call letters WJBT were assigned to the once-a-week station—"Where Jesus Blesses Thousands," Rader said.

Highlights of the long broadcast day were two popular evening programs, "The March of the Ages" and the "Back Home Hour." These followed regular evening services, also broadcast, after the 5000 people had gone home—to listen to the radio. According to Dr. Jones, the "really big" production, "The March of the Ages," was largely improvised on stage before a live microphone.

"The only idea Rader would give us as staff would be: 'Well fellows, tonight it's going to be the fall of Jericho.' And with that we'd be thinking of hymns and songs that would suit the theme and narration for the night.

"This was our only training in those days," Dr. Jones continues. "We had plenty of opportunity to try out every idea in the bag."

Despite the increasing use of radio by evangelists and preachers in the early '20s, not all Christians were agreed as to the worth of radio as a means for reaching the lost. "It's bound to be a failure as far as the gospel is concerned," some reasoned, "because it operates in the very realm in which Satan is supreme. Is he not the prince of the power of the air?" Others weren't as extreme but felt that radio was a passing fad and that it could only serve to empty churches.

"Paul Rader disproved that idea," Dr. Jones explains. "The Chicago Gospel Tabernacle had a

capacity of 5000 and it was almost always full.” The reason? They came to see in person the dedicated men and women they loved to hear on the radio.

Calvary Baptist Church

Other churches actively jumped into broadcasting. Four months after Rader’s first radio experience on WHT in Chicago, a church in New York City realized the possibilities of radio. On October 25, 1922, members of Calvary Baptist Church voted to appropriate \$1000, according to a church bulletin, “for the installation of a radio broadcasting plant for broadcasting sermons and music from the church.”

Less than five months later, on March 4, 1923, WQAA, Calvary’s own station, went on the air with its evening service. Dr. John Roach Straton delivered the first message over the 250-watt facility. On the occasion of the installation of the broadcasting system in his church a few weeks earlier, Dr. Straton had said, “I shall try to continue to do my part . . . in tearing down the strongholds of Satan, and I hope that our radio system will prove so efficient that when I twist the Devil’s tail in New York, his squawk will be heard across the continent.”

And despite the small transmitter, WQAA could be heard over a wide area since fewer stations were broadcasting then. A news item in the *New York Evening Mail* of April 21, 1923, revealed:

“WQAA has received reports from receiving stations as far north as Bath, Maine, and as far

south as Atlanta, Georgia. Ships have heard it from 500 miles out at sea.”

Soon all three Sunday services were being broadcast—at 11:00 a.m., 3:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.—as well as the Wednesday night prayer meetings. In 1927, WQAQ combined with powerful New York station WHN to gain additional outreach.

Though Calvary Baptist no longer owns and operates its own station, the church’s radio ministry continues as the country’s oldest remaining gospel broadcast. Its broadcasts are now heard on 46 stations in the U.S. and on powerful overseas stations HCJB, TWR and ELWA.

R. R. Brown

Calvary Baptist isn’t the only current broadcast ministry that can date its beginning back to 1923, however. Just a month after WQAQ went on the air in the East, Dr. R. R. Brown began broadcasting over WOAW (now WOW) in Omaha, Nebraska.

The station itself had only begun broadcasting on April 2, and the manager was looking for a minister to preach on WOAW each Sunday. Practically every other minister in Omaha had turned down the offer by the time the station official got around to asking Dr. Brown, who had been in town less than a year.

Brown agreed to speak on April 8 but was hesitant about accepting the offer to be the station’s regular minister. At a service at his Omaha Gospel Tabernacle two or three days after the first broadcast, he expressed his doubts about becoming the

regular speaker. At the close of the service, a visiting minister—Rev. Newman Hawkins—hurried up to Dr. Brown.

“You’d better be careful,” he warned. “Ever since I heard that radio station was being built, I have prayed that God would get an advantage over it.”

“If that’s the case,” Dr. Brown replied, “we had better be careful.”

The next morning he called the station to accept the offer to become WOAW’s radio pastor. The arrangements were unusual. No contract was ever signed and no salary was ever paid. Dr. Brown’s radio service was separate from his regular Sunday services at the Omaha Gospel Tabernacle, since one of the conditions to his acceptance was that his broadcast would be aired before most church services would begin.

On Christmas Day, 1923, Dr. Brown was asked to broadcast a special service to Captain Donald MacMillan and his crew at the South Pole.

By 1925 an estimated 100,000 listened each week to the “World Radio Congregation,” and Dr. Brown was called the “Billy Sunday of the Air” by a Texas publication. Testimonies from farm families who listened when muddy roads prevented them from getting to church and from congregations without pastors who met around the radio for their Sunday morning sermon showed Dr. Brown the importance of carrying on such a broadcast.

Until his death in February 1964, the Scotsman from Dagus Mines, Pennsylvania, continued to serve as pastor of Omaha Gospel Tabernacle and

WOW. Another Omaha station now broadcasts the program.

Charles E. Fuller

In May 1924 another gospel broadcast inaugurated a lengthy radio ministry. Charles E. Fuller had accepted Christ six years earlier as a result of the preaching of an old classmate of his at Pomona College (Calif.)—Paul Rader. Shortly after entering the ministry, Charles Fuller went to a Bible conference in Indianapolis. There he substituted for a radio preacher and was profoundly moved by that first experience before a microphone.

“On the train home,” Dr. Fuller said, “God spoke to me very definitely about the radio ministry.”

Returning home to Placentia, California, he arranged to broadcast his morning and evening services on a small 100-watt station in Santa Ana. There weren't many radios in the area in those days. Five or ten letters would have been considered a good listener response.

“Our program was very well received, though,” Fuller said. “We got 30 letters shortly after we began.”

In 1933 he resigned his pastorate in Placentia to devote all his time to gospel broadcasting, arranging for Sunday morning and evening programs on KGER, Long Beach. Odds seemed to be against him. On March 10 a disastrous earthquake paralyzed southern California. When Dr. Fuller arrived at the studio for his first broadcast over KGER, nobody was being allowed into the building.

“The police let me in, though, when I told them why I wanted to enter and when they saw the Bible tucked under my arm,” Fuller said.

For a time, though, even that seemed to have been a mistake.

“During the broadcast there was an aftershock, and I could see the transmitter swaying back and forth outside the window as I spoke,” he recalled. “I said out loud, ‘Look out!’ There was a volume of mail after that broadcast indicating that many had heard my comment—at least we found out that people were listening.”

As if an earthquake weren't enough, a couple of days later President Roosevelt closed all the banks in the nation, making things difficult for a week-old broadcast dependent on volunteer donations to keep on the air. Yet he was able to make it. His “Pilgrim Hour” on Sunday mornings from 11:00 to 12:00 a.m., usually attended by about 300, and his evening services, geared primarily to the unsaved, continued on KGER from 1933 to 1935.

Additional half-hour programs were broadcast in 1933 over KFI, Los Angeles, and KNX, Hollywood—both 50,000-watt stations.

In 1935 Charles Fuller decided to try an hour broadcast over powerful KNX, which could be heard in 11 western states, western Canada and Alaska. The Sunday he arrived for his first hour-long program from the huge Hollywood studios, he found a sparse 50 people in the auditorium. For music, he asked for volunteers from the audience, and a 12-voice choir rehearsed quickly for the first hour-long “Old Fashioned Revival Hour.”

A management change at KNX in 1937 forced Dr. Fuller to switch to a Mutual Broadcasting System hookup on 13 stations, with one as far east as Gary, Indiana. Eight months later a crisis developed. A large corporation wanted Dr. Fuller's time spot for a nationwide program.

"Rudy," he told his radio agent, "you let Mutual know that the 'Old Fashioned Revival Hour' will take that network coast-to-coast."

Astonished, the agent asked if he thought he could make it.

"No," Fuller replied, "I cannot, but God can."

So in August 1937 the "Old Fashioned Revival Hour" was heard across the nation on 66 MBS stations. The cost jumped accordingly, from \$1441 to \$4500 a week. The program was on 117 stations by October 1938 and 550 by 1942. A half-hour program since 1958, the "Old Fashioned Revival Hour"—now called "The Joyful Sound"—is heard on more than 143 stations around the world. Though Fuller died in March 1968 at the age of 80, the program he founded continues. His son Daniel heads the organization, with David Allan Hubbard doing the speaking.

Chapter 6

Gospel Trailblazers (II)

Moody Bible Institute

In 1925 two students were playing gospel songs on their cornets and handing out tracts at Moody Bible Institute's exhibit at the Illinois Products Exposition. Not far away, Chicago radio station WGES was preparing for a live broadcast from its exhibition. By air time, however, their musicians hadn't shown up. A station official sprinted over to Moody's booth.

"May we borrow your two young musicians?" he asked. Naturally, the boys jumped at the chance to play on the radio.

A few days later the Bible institute received an invitation from WGES to present a full-hour radio program each Sunday at no charge. This taste of what radio could do to spread the gospel whetted the appetites of school officials, who decided to set up a studio and purchase equipment for a station of their own.

On July 28, 1926, WMBI beamed its first broadcast to the residents of Chicago. Since then, the Moody Bible Institute station has pioneered radio drama with a distinctive Christian flavor. It has featured high-quality music and has released many gospel programs. In 1943 FM was added, in 1958 a branch station was erected in Cleveland, and in 1960 another branch station in Moline, Illinois, went on the air. The group of stations is known as the Moody Radio Network.

Donald Grey Barnhouse

One of the first religious broadcasters to go on a nationwide network hookup on a regular basis was Donald Grey Barnhouse. In 1927 he had come to pastor the Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia on one condition—that the church change the format of its Sunday evening services to a vespers and that these vesper services be broadcast.

From 1928 to 1932 Dr. Barnhouse was heard every Sunday evening across the nation on CBS. This vesper service format continued until 1949 when the Philadelphia pastor inaugurated the “Bible Study Hour.” Dr. Barnhouse began an exhaustive verse-by-verse study of Romans in 1956 that was to take him five years to complete on the “Bible Study Hour.” He died in November 1961, shortly after he had finished the study. James M. Boice is the present speaker on the “Bible Study Hour.”

The vaudeville era of radio began in 1930. These were to be the days of Amos 'n Andy, Ed

Wynn (the Texaco Firechief), Jack Benny and Bing Crosby. This first full year of the Great Depression Decade also saw two more gospel broadcasts take the air.

T. Myron Webb

In Texas Dr. T. Myron Webb, who had prepared himself for the medical profession, began to broadcast health lectures in 1930. A born-again Christian, he had a burden for lost souls from the beginning but, according to Mrs. Webb, he tried to bargain with God. "I'll minister to the physical needs of the people," he said. "Someone else can minister to their spiritual needs."

Yet soon after he had begun broadcasting his health lectures, he saw the tremendous impact of radio. He decided then to use broadcasting for the spreading of spiritual medicine. On June 26, 1930, on an Amarillo station, he launched a gospel broadcasting ministry that was to span 34 years.

Moving to Enid, Oklahoma, in 1934, Dr. Webb started broadcasting a Sunday afternoon Bible class known as "Back to the Bible," on KCRC, Enid. Several hundred people began attending the classes and over the years became somewhat of a congregation, even holding their own Wednesday night prayer meetings.

It was in 1934 that a young preacher—Theodore H. Epp—three years out of seminary met Dr. Webb and was greatly challenged by the potential of radio. The first radio message Mr. Epp ever delivered was on Dr. Webb's program in November 1934.

Later, when Dr. Webb moved his program to Tulsa to broadcast over KVOO, he changed the name to the "Bible Fellowship Hour." At about the same time, his young colleague, Mr. Epp, was making plans to leave the southwest to establish a gospel broadcast in Nebraska.

"Since we're changing our name," Webb told him, "you can use our old name—'Back to the Bible'—if you'd like."

'Lutheran Hour'

In addition to Webb's broadcast, another program was inaugurated in 1930. On October 2, 1930, the late Dr. Walter A. Maier urged listeners of the first "Lutheran Hour" to "cultivate faith built on the sure promises of the Bible, not on hoarded wealth and gilt-edged investments." To those hearing the broadcast on the 32-station CBS hookup, Dr. Maier's advice cut right to their souls, for Americans were seeing firsthand that year just how fleeting material possessions were. Only a year earlier the stock market had crashed, driving thousands to the brink of despair and to suicide.

After 36 weeks, however, "The Lutheran Hour" discontinued because of financial problems and because of a new CBS policy restricting religious programming to Sunday mornings.

But this wasn't the end of the program sponsored by the Lutheran Laymen's League and the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod. The program was revived on Sunday afternoon, February 10, 1935. It was given a 13-week trial period over WXYZ, Detroit, and WLW, Cincinnati.

Listener response was encouraging, which led officials to sign with the Mutual Broadcasting System for release on an eight-station hookup. Once again Dr. Maier was the speaker on October 20, 1935, as "The Lutheran Hour" went on the air to stay from studios at KFUE on the St. Louis Concordia Seminary campus where Dr. Maier was a professor.

"The Lutheran Hour" inaugurated overseas broadcasting in English and Spanish over HCJB (Quito) and KZRM (Manila) in 1940. Today "The Lutheran Hour" is released over more than 900 Mutual, NBC and independent stations in the United States and Canada and over 700 other stations around the world in 41 languages.

The impact of such gospel radio pioneers as Paul Rader and R. R. Brown continued to be felt in the early 1930s as a new venture in broadcasting began to unfold—missionary radio.

Clarence Jones and Reuben Larson

Two men—Dr. Clarence W. Jones and Reuben E. Larson—got the plans rolling that eventually led to the founding of HCJB, Quito, Ecuador.

Dr. Jones had been associated with Paul Rader's gospel radio ministry from the start as a member of the brass quartet that had accompanied the Chicago preacher on his first broadcast on WHT in 1922. Like everyone else in those days, including the "pros," Dr. Jones and the rest of the crew learned by doing.

"In those days," Dr. Jones recalls, "we learned so many things about radio by trying out ideas.

Sure, we made mistakes and had many failures, but we always tried to learn from our mistakes and somehow to improve the next time.

“This,” he points out, “was great training for the mission field radio work. Through those years of training God was getting me ready for something else—something about which I hadn’t the slightest idea then.”

Reuben Larson was Dr. Jones’s covisionary and, like Jones, he was influenced greatly by one of the first radio preachers—Dr. R. R. Brown of Omaha, Nebraska. After his graduation from St. Paul (Minn.) Bible Institute, Larson had been engaged in itinerant evangelism and pastoral work, while keeping an eye on mission field possibilities. One day while attending a conference in a Duluth, Minnesota, church, he had the opportunity to hear Dr. Brown speak.

Larson was moved by the radio pastor’s enthusiastic account of the opportunities afforded him to preach the gospel on radio. He decided that if he was ever given the chance, he, too, would accept the challenge to use the airwaves to win souls for Christ. It was not long after this that Reuben Larson met with Dr. Jones in Chicago.

There they discovered they shared many similar ideas on missionary radio broadcasting. Soon the Larsons were on their way to the mission fields of Ecuador, taking with them plans and ideas for a radio station in that South American country.

On August 15, 1930, Larson was able to secure a broadcasting license from the Ecuadorian government for what would be the first radio station in the entire country. But they needed more than just

a license—a transmitter and engineer, for example. And God provided.

CBS had assigned a young engineer, Eric Williams, to work the “Breakfast Brigade” program, which originated from the Chicago Gospel Tabernacle each morning. Listening to the gospel day after day, he soon became convicted of his need for the Lord. Eventually he was led to Christ by Clarence Jones.

As he became aware of the plans for a missionary radio station, he quit his job with CBS to devote his time and talent to designing and building a 200-watt transmitter. Williams was the station’s engineer on Christmas Day, 1931, when HCJB—“The Voice of the Andes”—went on the air for the first time. A new era had begun.

Clarence Erickson

But another era ended two years later when, in 1933, Clarence Erickson accepted Paul Rader’s invitation to take over the ministry at the Chicago Gospel Tabernacle. Mr. Erickson also took over Rader’s daily radio program, then being broadcast by WLS.

Within a few months, Erickson switched his broadcast to WCBD in Waukegan, necessitating a 75-mile round trip from Chicago each morning for him and his organist, Merrill Dunlop—a veteran of Rader’s radio days. This was the beginning of the “Heaven and Home Hour.”

When WCBD changed its call letters to WAIT and moved to Chicago, Erickson and the “Heaven and Home Hour” went along. In 1941 WHO, Des

Moines, Iowa, was added and a network was gradually built up. Today the program's headquarters are in Glendale, California, and the ministry is directed by Erickson's successor, Russell Killman.

The 1930s spawned several other gospel broadcasts, possibly as a reflex action to meet the needs of a nation discouraged by economic depression and severe drought. Besides Clarence Erickson's "Heaven and Home Hour," there were Paul Meyers's "Haven of Rest" and J. Harold Smith's "Radio Bible Hour."

Paul Meyers

Paul Meyers rose to the position of executive manager of two southern California radio stations before drinking cost him his job. After he was saved out of alcoholism, Meyers felt God's call to the ministry, but his only training was in broadcasting. Using the abilities God had given him, Paul Meyers—or First Mate Bob, as he is known on the program—soon developed the "Haven of Rest" format, featuring quartet and organ music with short evangelistic messages. The first program was released in March 1934.

J. Harold Smith

J. Harold Smith's "Radio Bible Hour" is another mid-Depression entry into gospel broadcasting which has survived. The program has been on the air continuously since the first broadcast on December 1, 1935.

Like the other pioneers in gospel radio, Mr. Smith had a conviction that such a broadcast was

the will of God. This gave him the necessary faith to pay in advance for the first program. He recalls the incident:

“In December of 1935 I walked into a radio station in Greenville, South Carolina, and asked if they would sell me time for a daily program. The manager, hoping to scare me off, I think, said, ‘Yes, but you’ll have to pay \$100 a week for the first five programs—in advance.’”

From his total assets of \$110 he paid the station manager the requested amount, leaving himself a \$10 bill. Yet on the Monday afternoon of the second week he was able to walk in with a second \$100 to pay for his next five broadcasts.

The year of 1938 was not a good one for the human race in general. Ominous war clouds were gathering over Europe. The hope of Munich had been shattered by Hitler’s march into Sudetenland. War seemed inevitable.

But this was also the first year for John Zoller’s “America Back to God Hour.” Zoller, whose gospel radio experience dated back to the 1922 Methodist revival meeting in Michigan, had been active in broadcasting throughout the ’30s. By 1935 he had daily programs on Detroit’s WMBC and WEXI, as well as on stations in New York City, Baltimore, Chicago and others. Now, as global events seemed sure to draw the United States into war, Zoller was asked to gear his gospel broadcasts to America’s servicemen.

“During the war,” Zoller says, “the ‘America Back to God Hour’ could be heard over stations on every continent—on War Department stations as well as Mutual network stations and independents in this country until 1946.”

Since then Zoller has continued a limited radio ministry in addition to literature and tract distribution.

M. R. De Haan

The "Radio Bible Class" is one of the most beloved programs of all time. It also began its tenure in 1938. Leaving a medical practice a few short years after receiving his M.D. from the University of Illinois, M. R. De Haan returned to school—this time to Western Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids, Michigan. After a short pastorate in his denomination following graduation, Dr. De Haan left to found an independent congregation in a theater in Grand Rapids. (Theaters were closed on Sundays then in that city.)

His Bible teaching became well known, and soon he found himself conducting weekly Bible classes in Flint, Buffalo and Detroit. These were in addition to his responsibilities at his own church. As a result of the Friday and Saturday Bible classes in Detroit, De Haan began his "Radio Bible Class" over a small Detroit-area station. Today the half-hour Bible-study program is heard on nearly 500 stations each week. Richard De Haan, who had begun working for his father in the shipping room at the age of 16 and, by his own admission, had worked in "about every other department in the place," took over the speaking chores of the "Radio Bible Class" upon the death of his father in December 1965.

Two more gospel programs entered the broadcasting arena before the end of the decade—"Back

to the Bible Broadcast” and the “Back to God Hour.”

Theodore Epp

Early in April 1939 a young preacher from Oklahoma nervously waited to be called into the office of the managers of two jointly owned stations in Lincoln, Nebraska. As a matter of fact, Theodore H. Epp says, “To be quite frank, I was very much afraid.”

But God was at his side, just as He had stood by other courageous men who had dared to believe that radio could be used to bring souls to Christ.

“We note that you have everything on your broadcasts that people want except something from the heart,” Mr. Epp boldly told the station managers. “We have that and would like the opportunity of presenting it to the people.”

The managers, evidently impressed with the applicant’s sincerity and realizing that a gospel program might be what their stations needed, expressed a willingness to take on the program.

“I asked to purchase a 30-minute daily period on the larger of the two stations—10,000-watt KFAB,” he explains, “but instead, a few days later I was offered a contract for 15 minutes on the 250-watt KFOR at \$4.50 per program.”

So on May 1, 1939, the “Back to the Bible Broadcast” (Mr. Epp had decided to accept T. Myron Webb’s offer of the use of the name) was heard for the first time on the small local station. First station additions to “Back to the Bible’s” network came in 1941 when WNAX, Yankton, South

Dakota, then KMA, Shenandoah, Iowa, and KVOD, Denver, Colorado, were added. By the end of 1942 five more stations had been added to the network. In 1943 powerful HCJB beamed "Back to the Bible" internationally for the first time. At the end of the year the broadcast was being released 102 times a week. Today, "Back to the Bible" is released on over 500 stations around the world, most of which release the program six times a week—a total of over 3800 releases a week.

Harry Schultze

The "Back to God Hour," the radio ministry of the Christian Reformed Church, also began in 1939. As much as 10 years earlier the denomination had recognized the need for a radio voice, but it wasn't until 1938 that a radio committee was appointed.

Then the wheels started moving, and in less than a year—on December 17, 1939—the first "Back to God Hour" was released over WJJD, Chicago, with the late Dr. Harry Schultze as speaker.

In 1940 the program was expanded to a 26-week season over nine stations and to a year-round schedule by 1943. December 7, 1947, marked the first broadcast over the Mutual network, which continues to release the "Back to God Hour" for a half hour each Sunday. Dr. Peter Eldersveld took over the speaking chores in 1946 and was its voice until his death in 1965.

Chapter 7

Gospel Radio Today

Since the close of the days of pioneer gospel broadcasting, which we have more or less arbitrarily set at 1940, a number of important radio ministries have joined the airwaves with many of the old standbys in proclaiming the message of Jesus Christ. Many of these old-timers are still on the air with vital programming, of course, including the "Old Fashioned Revival Hour" (now "The Joyful Sound"), "The Lutheran Hour" and "Back to the Bible Broadcast."

One of the most unusual gospel radio programs is "Unshackled!" produced by Chicago's Pacific Garden Mission. The original idea for "Unshackled!" came from the mission's superintendent, Harry G. Saulnier, and several others in 1949, about a year before the first program was aired. "Our feeling at the time was that dramatized testimonies of men and women saved through the mission's ministry could be greatly used of the Lord in reaching a great multitude of sinners, who perhaps would never darken the doors of a church or rescue mission," Saulnier says.¹

After prayer, the men got together with script-writer John Gillies of WMBI to put together a pilot program to present to the mission's board of trustees. "They received the pilot program with enthusiasm and voted to proceed with the production of the series," Saulnier recalls.²

Picking a name for the dramatic program proved to be a problem. Many names were suggested, but it wasn't until just three weeks before the first broadcast that the staff settled on one. "John Camp (now owner of WPOW in New York City), who was retained as our agent," explains Saulnier, "had returned to my office one evening after a conference with the men in charge of operations at WGN. One of these men had been a navy radioman during World War II and suggested the name 'Unshackled!' 'When we started a radio message from our ship,' he explained, 'we always began with the code name "shackled," and when finished, the code name was "unshackled."'" Though not especially moved by the name at first, they began to think and pray about it. "Soon," Saulnier says, "we definitely felt that this was it. Our experience has proven this to have been the Lord's leading." The first broadcast was on September 23, 1950, over WGN, the *Chicago Tribune's* 50,000-watt station. Today 365 stations carry the program, which features dramas based on the experiences of people whose lives have been changed by God.³

The Southern Baptist Convention, meeting in Baltimore in 1940, approved efforts to begin a gospel program. The result was "The Baptist Hour," first broadcast on January 5, 1941.

Under the guidance of the Convention's radio committee—now called the Radio-TV Commission—the amount of programs produced increased from just one from 1940 to 1946 to about 25 programs by the mid-'60s, totaling nearly 80,000 releases a year. Over 1700 stations, both radio and TV, were carrying these programs by the mid-'60s. The Commission, under the direction of Dr. Paul Stevens, has pioneered in the adaptation of the gospel message to radio's new segmented programming style, featuring short segments of a variety of programming, from music and news items to interviews and feature material.

According to Commission aims, "The radio and television programs are not intended to take the place of the preacher in his pulpit—or the face-to-face encounter with any witness for Christ."⁴

Billy Graham's "Hour of Decision" began in November 1950 over 223 ABC-affiliated stations at the time the evangelist started becoming a household word in the United States. The program is now heard on more than 800 stations in the United States, Canada and Australia and 120 foreign stations. The chief target of the evangelistic program is the lost soul, the confused, wandering, 20th-century spirit. Drawing on current events and digging into Scripture, Graham consistently presents in clear, two-fisted language the world's need for the provisions of Christ.

Another mainstay of evangelical radio broadcasting is the "Light and Life Hour," the worldwide radio ministry of the Free Methodist Church, based at Winona Lake, Indiana. The weekly program was first aired in October 1944 over 28

stations in North America. Today the program, with the Rev. Robert F. Andrews as speaker, is broadcast on about 140 stations around the world. Since 1958, foreign-language versions of the program have been developed, including outreaches in Russian, Marathi, Hindi, Kanarese, Cebuano, Spanish and Latvian. The Russian program is released 17 times a week over TWR and FEBC. Commenting on the program's effectiveness in Russia, Andrews says that it seems "the USSR government does not jam gospel broadcasts as much as they do political ones."

"Morning Sunshine," a daily devotional program, began broadcasting from Elyria, Ohio, on October 12, 1950. Founder and chief speaker is Ralph W. Neighbour, a veteran of the old Paul Rader radio series teams of the early 1920s on Chicago's WHT. The program is heard on 27 stations in the country in addition to HCJB.

Jack Wyrzten's Word of Life ministry began its broadcasting efforts on a small, 500-watt Brooklyn station in 1940. Today the program is heard in several parts of the United States and in much of the world. Programs, primarily youth-oriented in connection with Wyrzten's Word of Life camps, are produced in English, Portuguese (for audiences in Brazil) and Russian.

The Nazarene Radio League (NRL) of Kansas City, Missouri, produces "Showers of Blessing," a gospel program heard on more than 600 stations worldwide each week. The first broadcast was aired by 37 stations on June 17, 1945. The NRL's Spanish-language broadcast, "*La Hora Nazarena*" ("The Nazarene Hour"), was begun in 1953 and is

heard on about 535 stations overseas, including TWR and HCJB.

Perhaps one of the most innovative gospel broadcasters has been Mennonite Broadcasts, Inc., of Harrisonburg, Virginia. "The Mennonite Hour," with speaker Dr. David Augsburger, was launched in 1951 over WSVB in Harrisonburg. The 15-minute weekly program, called "The Way to Life" in some areas, presents the Christian message in contemporary terms and is heard on about 112 stations a week.

Mennonite Broadcasts also produces programs in Spanish, Navajo, Japanese, Italian, German and Russian. In all there are about 898 weekly releases in seven languages.

"Heart to Heart," on the air since 1950, is prepared by Mennonite Broadcasts with the housewife and mother in mind. Speaker Ella May Miller, mother of four, brings advice and encouragement from the Christian perspective on family problems and child raising. Interestingly, this program is prepared in two formats, with 85 stations carrying the 15-minute weekly version and 97 airing the 5-minute daily broadcast.

The chief reason for having two versions is that many stations prefer shorter programs in keeping with their programming policies. This trend to segmentation by radio stations and the growing difficulty in getting air time for half-hour and even 15-minute gospel programs, has caused Mennonite Broadcasts to experiment with shorter broadcasts. Currently heard on 421 stations, these Family Service Radio Spots last 60 seconds—about the length of an average commercial—enough time to

provide the listener with a challenge aimed at a problem relevant to his everyday life.

With people on the go, leading fast-paced lives, fewer and fewer uncommitted people are motivated enough to listen to a long message. The approach of these minute programs varies from situation dialogues to humor, monologues and editorials and are written sharply to “grab” the busy listener.

“We have found radio stations much more easily persuaded to take one-minute and five-minute broadcasts with creative formats,” says Kenneth J. Weaver, executive director of Mennonite Broadcasts. Listener response is hard to measure, according to Weaver, since these broadcasts and the seasonal (Christmas and Easter) newscasts are not designed to bring mail response. “On the ‘Heart to Heart’ program, which is released both as a 5-minute daily and a 15-minute weekly, we find that during a survey month the stations carrying the 5-minute daily broadcast run away with most of the positions in the top 50 stations. However, we need to recognize that they have more exposure per week than a 15-minute program.”

“By the very nature of one-minute broadcasts,” continues Weaver, “it is difficult to do more than attempt to communicate one basic Christian truth in a given spot or series of spots. However, many of the more conservative fundamental Christians believe that unless one tells the whole gospel story all at once, he has not really communicated for Christ. This creates some problem for those who listen to the Christian radio stations

and find the one-minute spots not going far enough. If they were able to listen to the whole range of spots over a period of a year or two, though, they would find more of the complete gospel message spelled out.”

A significant development in postwar America has been the establishment of many Christian owned and operated radio stations. WMBI, the voice of Moody Bible Institute, was the real pioneer voice of Christian stations (see chapter 6), though numerous churches had their own transmitters in the 1920s. But in this small book it is impossible to name them all and tell their stories. However, a sampling of these stations serves to show how God has used this particular aspect of Christian broadcasting.

KTIS AM and FM Stereo in Minneapolis, Minnesota, was an outgrowth of the vision of Dr. W. B. Riley, founder and first president of Northwestern College, who felt the need for a radio station that could broadcast the gospel and other programs of worth for the entire family. After several years of negotiations, KTIS signed on the air in February 1949. FM was added the following May. The station added FM stereo in 1967.

The purpose of KTIS, according to station officials, is to present instruction and challenge for the Christian of every age; to provide balanced Christian music, leaning to the conservative side; and to confront non-Christians with Christ's claim on their lives.

“Since adding FM stereo in 1967,” says station manager Paul Ramseyer, “we have carried out our objectives more specifically by gearing AM to the

Christian who likes considerable Bible teaching and devotional content. FM stereo is for the Christian who wants mostly music, including light classical and pop-concert, and more particularly for the non-Christian who hopefully will be attracted.”

KCCV in Kansas City, Missouri, went on the air November 5, 1962. Founded by Richard Bott, the station boasts an area award-winning news department which draws many Kansas City area listeners to it. Bott, a former owner-operator of a rock station in Monterrey, California, chose to establish his Christian station in Kansas City because “it was in the traditional Bible belt and had a potential audience of over 2 million.”⁵

“We are a Christian radio station broadcasting Christian programs and music throughout the day,” says Gary Coulter, KCCV general manager. “Our first interest is to meet the Christian community and to serve them as adequately as we can, but at the same time we try to program the station in such a way as to be an evangelistic thrust in the community.”⁶

In addition to independent Christian stations, there are several networks, including Moody Radio Network of Chicago and Family Radio Network of San Francisco. One of the fastest growing, though, is Christian Broadcasting Network of Portsmouth, Virginia, which operates five FM stations in New York State, an FM radio station and TV station in Portsmouth, Virginia, and an AM station in Bogotá, Colombia.

“On the New York stations we have a Christian format, but we use contemporary sacred music that is geared in a large measure to the college-age

audience,” says Pat Robertson, president of the Christian Broadcasting Network, Inc. “On our Portsmouth radio and television stations, the essential thrust is toward the Christian, although we saw approximately two to three thousand people come to the Lord last year.” A second TV channel has been granted to the network in Atlanta, Georgia, and other plans call for “at least three more domestic television stations, plus a major color production facility for Christian television programs which is already in existence,” Robertson says.

The Christian station with the biggest potential audience is WPOW, New York City, with about 20 million people within listening distance. The station is on the air 11 hours on Sunday and seven and a half hours a day the remainder of the week, sharing time on the frequency with another station.

The station, owned and operated by John Camp, a former radio agent for many leading Christian programs, went on the air in 1959.

“In the late 1950s,” Camp explains, “I was handling the ‘Back to the Bible Broadcast’ agency-wise. Billy Graham had asked Theodore Epp to get time on some station in New York City so he could refer the converts to the broadcast. For over three years I tried to get time on a station that would carry the broadcast on a daily basis. I was unsuccessful except for one station which would open up at 11:30 to 12:00 midnight—which, of course, was unsatisfactory to us. When the opportunity came along to buy this particular station, even though it was a share-time operation,

I felt this was God's answer as it would provide a means for getting the program out on a daily basis in the largest city in the United States."

From 4:00 to 8:30 a.m. Monday through Saturday gospel programming is aired. Then WPOW goes off the air, returning from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m., when they run "ethnic programs of various foreign languages, including German, Polish, Hungarian, Czech, Greek and Ukrainian. In some cases," says Camp, "we are the only station carrying some of these languages, so we have an isolated captive audience."

There exists a basic difference of opinion among Christian program producers and station operators as to who should be the target of Christian broadcasting efforts. This difference of opinion is not disagreement as such, but rather evidence that God has given the burden for certain groups of people to certain broadcasters. Some, like Billy Graham's "Hour of Decision," are concerned primarily with reaching the unsaved. Others, like "Haven of Rest," seek mainly to encourage and comfort people caught up in the hectic pace of life through devotional-type programming. Still others, like "Back to the Bible," aim their Bible-teaching ministries primarily at Christians to "build up the saints," and seek to give new converts a solid foundation of doctrinal truth for healthy spiritual growth.

"We are living in a time of specialization," says Theodore Epp, Back to the Bible's founder, "which is nothing new so far as the gospel ministry is concerned. In Romans 12 and I Corinthians 12 various gifts for the work of the Lord are listed.

Paul said of his own ministry that he planted, whereas Apollos, another of God's servants, watered (I Cor. 3:6).

“Radio stations are now specializing,” he continues. “They are gearing their programs to reach specific audiences. Some specialize in rock music, some in country and western music, some in talk and news, and some in religious programming. It is just as necessary that those of us who are in the gospel broadcasting field know our particular calling and place in the ministry allotted to us by God. God's plan has always been to direct His servants into specific areas of ministry.

“The responsibility of each broadcaster is to find out which aspect of the ministry God has allotted to him. It became clear to us at Back to the Bible that God has especially called us to a task and responsibility that differs considerably from the majority of gospel broadcasts. The purpose of the ministry is clearly set forth in the words: ‘For the perfecting [preparing] of the saints, for the work of the ministry.’” Some churches have missed this important fact, according to Epp. “They feel that their main ministry is evangelism,” he says, “and often the only messages preached to their congregations are evangelistic, even though there may be only one or two unsaved people in the audience. The Bible states that the responsibility of the churches is to train the individual, not merely send them out—but lead them out into personal evangelism. God has His great evangelists in this day,” Epp stresses, “but He also has called certain ones to train and build His Body of believers into mature, Christ-honoring servants. It is a

shame that so many converts are brought out from bondage only to be left in the desert. They must be led on to be brought into the land of spiritual warfare and victory.”

All programs should have a definite audience in mind and, in Theodore Epp's words, “they should shoot at their targets with rifles instead of shotguns.” They need to know who they are trying to reach. These basic types of Christian programming are not mutually exclusive, of course. Bible centered evangelistic preaching, for example should also convey a knowledge of Scripture, while clear Bible teaching should also convince people of their need for God. Yet the broadcaster should still have one particular type of person in mind as he prepares his program. Programs produced with no particular audience in mind run the very real risk of not appealing to anyone.

One study, cited by Roy Danish in the *ICL Bulletin*, shows just how far off the mark the bulk of religious programming has been in the Los Angeles area. The study showed that 64 percent of the programs were intended for persons of any or all religions; 95 percent were aimed at people of all income levels, from the very poor family in Watts to the very rich in Beverly Hills; 86 percent of the broadcasts took no account of the differences in educational levels; 83 percent were aimed at people of all ages; 95 percent were directed at both men and women; and 96 percent disregarded ethnic backgrounds of their potential audience.⁷

One is tempted to wonder what these LA-area broadcasters were trying to accomplish. Perhaps they themselves didn't know. The result no doubt

was that much of their message either went unheard or went uncomprehended. How can a Black child in Watts and a film star in a Beverly Hills mansion relate to the same type of gospel presentation? The message of Christ is obviously appropriate to both, but it is the method in which it is presented that can either make or break the effectiveness of the message. "To communicate anything," RCA's president Robert W. Sarnoff has said, "you must first have an audience and second, you must have its attention."⁸ To broadcast the seed aimlessly is to fail to communicate.

"Good content can be wasted when transported on the wheels of a bad vehicle," says Tom Watson, Jr., radio and films secretary for The Evangelical Alliance Mission (TEAM). "Likewise a good vehicle can be employed in vain to carry bad program content. Both can be good—and yet useless—because insufficient attention is given to listening habits and tastes."⁹

It takes an extremely high degree of motivation for the average listener to listen to a program obviously not designed with him in mind. Worse yet, a program may not have been designed for any group in particular, as apparently was the case with most of these Los Angeles-area programs.

Secular programmers and advertisers don't put a message on the air or a product on the market until they have found out as much as possible about their potential.

"A commercial product never hopes to sell everybody," radio agent Arnold E. Johnson told members of the Western Chapter of the National Religious Broadcasters, meeting in Los Angeles in

September 1966. "The real professional digs out the facts on who his best prospects are and then aims his promotion specifically to the peculiarities of that group. . . . The marketer, through research, obtains a clear, concise picture of every characteristic of his best prospects. Then he homes in on that target with everything he's got—packaging, color, advertising, merchandising—every facet of his entire promotion is aimed at this target. He has researched and exposed the Achilles heel and he is dedicated to zeroing in for the kill. No useless, costly scattering of shots for him."

"Maybe some of our research should be directed to ascertaining how meaningful we are to the man-in-the-street, the unchurched populace of our listeners," HCJB cofounder Clarence Jones says. "After all the thousands of programs and millions of dollars spent on production and radio time, wouldn't it be highly profitable to courageously assess and evaluate this one fact: are we actually making contact with the listening masses (especially the unchurched) with a real and vital impact? Or, are we beaming 90% of our Gospel programing to the 10% or less of the audience already Christian? Does the large proportion of our audience, which never darkens the door of a church, remain aloof and immune to most of our present religious radio and TV releases simply because we don't slant our thinking and talking toward it?"¹⁰

"What is wrong with Sunday-morning programming?" asks a leading advertising man. "With the exception of elderly or shut-ins, the priests and ministers are talking to people who are already sold

on religious values, and who are probably going to or have attended services that day. This is similar to advertising for those already sold on your product.”¹¹

While not advocating the curtailment of all programs designed to teach, encourage and comfort believers, Clarence Jones would like to see more broadcasters use their creative “imagining” to produce programs for *non-believers*. “Let’s spread our output into ever wider territory,” he says, “as broad in content as radio outreach itself!”¹²

To reach the uncommitted, who, more than likely, have a bias against the message of the church or, at best, are neutral, Jones recognizes that program content must be altered. “Right here,” he comments, “much can be gained from studying seriously the indirect method of presenting the Gospel . . . which simply means some other approach than the ‘hymn and a thing’ style so characteristic of most Gospel programs. . . . [This approach] should be friendly and sincere with as many varieties and twists to the style as there are personalities at both ends of the fish pole and line, . . .” he says, “but certainly, always something of interest, understandable and therefore attractive to the ‘out-of-churchers.’ ”

“In working terms,” Jones continues, “it seems to boil down to this: if religious radio and TV programers really want to reach the man in the street, and most of us say he is the ‘fish’ we are after, then we are going to have to change our approach without changing our goal . . . be more

artful, more concerned with our 'bait'; and above all, go where the fish are, outside the aquarium."¹³

Admittedly, it will take courage for broadcasters to tackle the challenge. According to Jones, one of the major tasks is to start educating "the Christians who pray for, support and respond to our present programs as to what there is to be gained by turning our sights, radio-wise on other targets than themselves. Christian listeners are just going to have to learn patience and be unselfish when their favorite radio pastor starts talking to 'the world' in language not so theological and familiar as heretofore."

"We must somehow find courage to break with a strategy dictated by the theories of supporting constituents, and turn our attention instead to the hard and cold pragmatics of effective broadcasting," Tom Watson concludes. "If we are good broadcasters, then somehow the economics will work out. If we are not good broadcasters, then perhaps the spectrum is well relieved of our voice."¹⁴

What about priorities in Christian programming? Watson thinks that "we must find new ways for active cooperation among broadcasters to increase effectiveness and eliminate competition and overlap. Consideration needs to be given to possibilities of exchange of information, materials, personnel and ideas in order to get the job done more efficiently."¹⁵

"Our statements of the gospel," says David Augsberger, speaker on the "Mennonite Hour," "tend to include all from A to Z. Why should they? Could not some run from A to F, others

from G to J, and some (for the most mature) from X to Z? And should we not be constantly rephrasing our ABCs to speak to the vast number of those who are religiously illiterate?"¹⁶

The individual program producers are not the only ones faced with the problem of determining who their target audience will be. Managers of Christian stations have to keep their audience very much in mind when developing format and lining up program schedules. But the station manager has one advantage over the independent program producer—he has a full day's air time to plan for, rather than a mere half-hour or 15-minute segment. If the station owner wants to reach both the saved and unsaved, he can adopt the "block" concept of programming. In simplest terms, this means that groups of similarly aimed programs—those designed to reach the unsaved, for example—can be scheduled together. Stations using this technique may program for the Christian in the morning or afternoon, and to the uncommitted in the evening hours. It is easier, therefore, for the station operator to reach a broader slice of the potential audience than the program producer.

Nevertheless, many stations aim their programming primarily at the Christian on the theory that a strong Church will evangelize, while other stations aim at the non-Christian on the theory that the Church isn't reaching these people.

"If a station defines its purpose as evangelism," says Tom Bissett, "its first objective is to build a large audience. A decision must be made regarding the type of format that will pull the largest possible share of listeners."

On the other hand, he says, "If a station's purpose is defined as a desire to teach and encourage Christians, its first objective is to air selected programs and music designed, by the views of the ownership and management, to meet the needs and desires of the local Christian community."¹⁷

Talk shows and strong news departments are two very popular types of programming that appeal to most radio listeners. The non-Christian will tune in a Christian station with a superior news program, for example, and then might become interested in a spiritual message that follows.

"Unfortunately," Phill Butler, general manager of the Broadcast Division, Kings Garden, Inc., says, "it would seem that the majority of station operators and program producers assume that both of these objectives can be reached in a single presentation. While on rare occasions this may be true, it is more often absolutely wrong. The Scripture repeatedly bears this out. Christ spoke to unregenerate man, both to individuals and masses on terms they understood. He presented essential truths in meaningful terms. To the disciples he spoke of other things: of matters related to established religion, of practices and traditions and theology. . . . The natural man understandeth [receiveth] not the things of the Spirit."¹⁸

"Station management should well remember that Christ spoke infrequently from the temple. Most of the time He was in the center of the action, fish markets, lakesides, villages and streets. . . . He spoke the language of the people, drew His illustrations from the affairs of everyday

life, met people in their normal surroundings, their place of business, and cut across the line of traditional religion, communicating effectively. Men were attracted to Him by the thousands. Not all lives were changed because few had the faith to believe, but they did hear and understand the message.”¹⁹

1. *The Old Lighthouse*, the story of the Pacific Garden Mission, by James R. Adair (Chicago: Moody Press, 1966).
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Communicating the Breath of Life*, p. 2, published by the Southern Baptists' Radio and Television Commission in 1965.
5. *Kansas City Star*, date unknown.
6. Paul Miller, "On the Radio Scene With Gary Coulter," *Conquest*, October 1968, p. 26.
7. Roy Danish, "Broadcasting," *ICB Bulletin*, March 1968, p. 9.
8. Robert W. Sarnoff, "Broadcasting: A Force for Freedom," an address delivered at the Emerson College Convocation, Boston, Mass., November 3, 1963.
9. Tom Watson, Jr., "Can We Make Christian Communication More Effective?" *Radio Telegram*, June 1968, p. 4.
10. Clarence W. Jones, "Your Fishing: Aquarium? Mainstream? Deep-Ocean?" (Part 1), *ICB Bulletin*, May 1968, p. 9.
11. "Returning the Audiences to Sunday Morning Radio," *Broadcasting*, as quoted in "Your Fishing: Aquarium? Mainstream? Deep-Ocean?" (Part 1), p. 11.
12. "Your Fishing: Aquarium? Mainstream? Deep-Ocean?" (Part 2), June 1968, p. 4.
13. "Your Fishing: Aquarium? Mainstream? Deep-Ocean?" (Part 1), p. 9.
14. "Can We Make Christian Communication More Effective?" p. 5.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

16. David Augsberger, "Are They Getting the Message?" *Eternity*, February 1968, p. 13.
17. Tom Bissett, "Christian Broadcasting Philosophy," *ICB Bulletin*, June 1968, p. 3.
18. Phill Butler, "Christian Broadcasting Philosophy: Fact or Fiction?" *ICB Bulletin*, September 1967, p. 3.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 4, 10.



One of the first gospel broadcasters was R. R. Brown, long-time pastor of the Omaha (Nebr.) Gospel Tabernacle. His broadcast, begun in 1923, continues today as an important ministry of the church. Brown died in 1964.



Charles E. Fuller, shown here with his wife at a New York crusade in 1946, began preaching on the radio in 1925. Later he founded the "Old Fashioned Revival Hour," one of the most beloved gospel broadcasts of all time.



A scene at the Long Beach (Calif.) City Auditorium during an "Old Fashioned Revival Hour" broadcast. Fuller's program was produced in this building for many years. Fuller died in 1968.



A scene of a Back to the Bible Saturday youth broadcast in 1945. Back to the Bible founder and director Theodore H. Epp is at the far right. To his right is Melvin Jones, the popular "Voice of Danny Orlis."



Back to the Bible's Theodore H. Epp has been the daily broadcast's principal speaker since 1939 when he founded the ministry in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Richard De Haan, son of Radio Bible Class founder Dr. M. R. De Haan, succeeded his father as speaker on the popular weekly radio program.

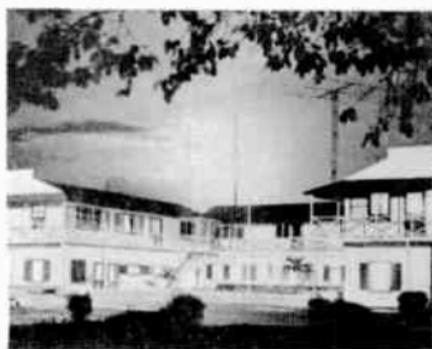




Dignitaries surround FEBC co-founder Robert Bowman (second from left) at the 20th anniversary of FEBC's first station in Manila, DZAS. Guest speaker at the occasion was Philippine President Ferdinand E. Marcos, (second from right). At far left is Leon O. Ty, publisher and FEBC–Philippines board member, and far right, Antonio Raquiza, Philippine Secretary of Public Works and Communications.



FEBC overseas transmitters located at Bocaue, Philippines. Equipment includes six 50,000-watt transmitters, one 10,000-watt transmitter and one 100,000-watt transmitter.



FEBC headquarters building at Christian Radio City, Manila. The building houses offices and studios.



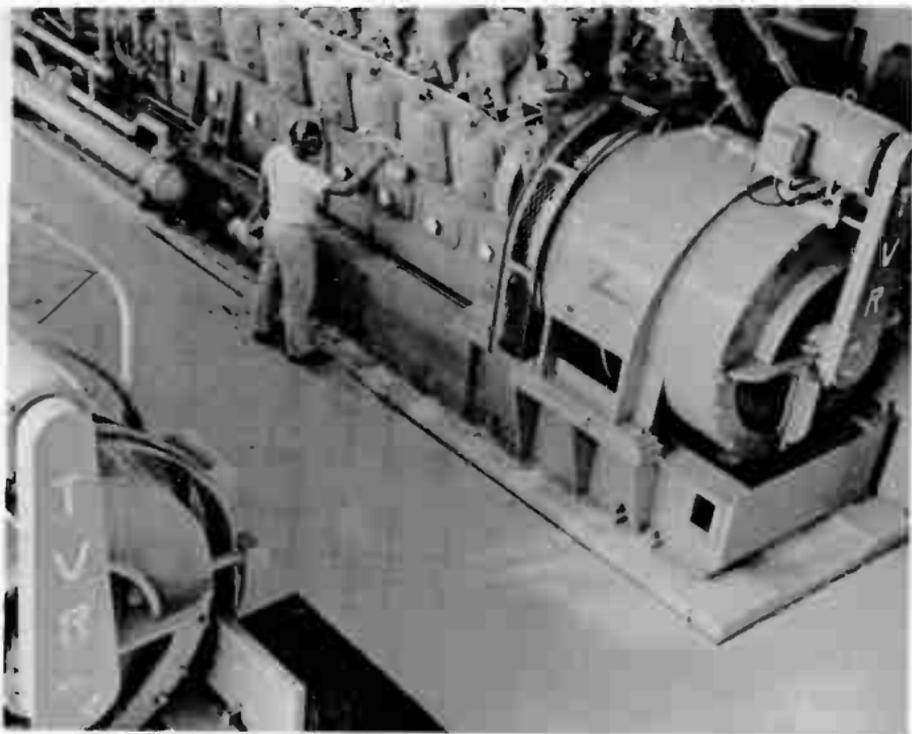
Missionary radio station HCJB, "The Voice of the Andes," in Quito, Ecuador, has pioneered public service broadcasting as a significant audience-building device for the gospel broadcasts. Here, HCJB-TV telecasts its version of "Meet the Press." Guest (center) is Galo Plaza, then Secretary-General of the Organization of American States.



At the heart of the HCJB compound in the mountains above Quito is this plaza. HCJB, founded by Clarence Jones and Reuben Larson in 1931, beams the gospel around the world from this advantageous location high in the rugged Andes Mountains.

Paul Freed,
founder and
president of
Trans World
Radio, the
powerful mis-
sionary voice
broadcasting
from Monte
Carlo and Bon-
aire.





TWR's diesel engine-generator units at the Bonaire site. Each unit generates 1600 kilowatts of electrical power, enabling the station to broadcast on shortwave and medium wave at the same time.



TWR's Monte Carlo transmitter building on Mt. Agel, overlooking the city, was built by Adolf Hitler for a Nazi propaganda station. TWR leases the building and transmitters full time from Radio Monte Carlo.



A view of TWR's transmitter master control at Monte Carlo. Located here are two 100,000-watt shortwave transmitters leased from Radio Monte Carlo. TWR transmits on medium wave during prime evening hours and on long wave to France in the early morning.

Chapter 8

Radio as Missionary

Radio is a way of life in almost every nation of the world. People hunger for news of what is going on around them, and many apparently like the “constant companionship” radio affords. Though radios are not nearly as abundant around the world as they are in the United States, where there are more sets than people, there seems to be enough radios to make broadcasts worthwhile. UNESCO’s guideline for minimum adequate radio saturation is 50 radios per 1000 population. As the number of radios has increased dramatically in this decade, the worldwide average—excluding North America—has more than doubled this minimal figure. Some areas like Europe, South America and the Far East have more than the average, while some nations in Africa and Asia have less. But figures indicate that all areas are experiencing rapidly growing radio populations. What this means to the missionary broadcaster is obvious—more people can hear the Message.

What is there about radio that makes it so fascinating to people regardless of nationality?

Media expert Wilbur Schramm writes that mass media can widen horizons. “Many people in a traditional society correctly perceive a quality of magic in the media when they first encounter them,” he writes. “They are magic, a wise African said to this writer, because they can ‘take a man up to a hill higher than any we can see on the horizon and let him look beyond.’ They are magic because ‘they can let a man see and hear where he has never been and know people he has never met.’ ”¹

Missionary radio attempts to capitalize on this natural fascination man has for radio. Today, from more than 50 locations worldwide and from about 80 transmitters of various power, missionary radio beams more than 5000 hours of Christian programming each week. Robert E. Burt, writing in *United Evangelical Action*, says that “it is astounding to note that the combined total of missionary broadcasts each week actually exceeds the weekly output of Communist propaganda in time, if not in power.”²

What follows is the story of how two of the superpower missionary broadcasting ministries—Trans World Radio (TWR) and Far East Broadcasting Company (FEBC) got started. (See chapter 6 for the pioneering story of HCJB, “The Voice of the Andes”).

Trans World Radio

Ralph Freed, father of TWR’s founder Paul Freed, was an executive of the Burroughs Adding Machine Company in Detroit, Michigan. One day an unsaved friend, to whom the elder Freed had

been witnessing, accused him of being a hypocrite if he actually believed what the Bible said about the lost but just sat in his chair earning a fancy salary. This confrontation so bothered him that he resigned his position to prepare to go to the mission field. Following a training period at Nyack Bible College in Nyack, New York, Ralph Freed was appointed by the Christian and Missionary Alliance to be general area chairman of its Palestine, Transjordan and Syria field. It was during this period, as young Paul Freed was growing up, that he first became burdened for the Arabic people.

“Later,” Paul Freed writes, “as I felt the burden for Spain growing on my heart, I relived some of these events in Arab lands which initiated my concern for the lost. Even back in those days, I felt the limitations of witnessing to ones and twos. We could reach only a few in person as we sat about the fire in the village. And the question started to shape in my mind, ‘What about all the others who have never had a chance?’ ”³

While holding a pastorate, Freed became interested in the Youth For Christ movement. He left His church to become YFC director in Greensboro, North Carolina. Torrey Johnson, founder of this “rally” concept for young people’s meetings, convinced Freed to go to Europe for a YFC conference.

“He pressed me to make the decision to attend the Youth For Christ conference in Beatenberg, Switzerland. . . .” Freed recalls. “Torrey probably had no hint that in urging me to go to Europe he was in a sense assisting God in pushing me right out

of his popular new American youth organization. Neither had I any intention of leaving him. Nevertheless, on my return from Switzerland and Spain, I had a broadened comprehension of a world without hope.”⁴

God had placed on Freed an overpowering burden for the Spanish people. And at this time, Freed says, “Radio remained foremost in my consideration of an answer for the Spanish millions.”⁵ In trying to raise money for his Spanish project, he met what he calls indifference among the American people. He came to the conclusion that the thing for him to do was to step out in this direction himself. So he went into business, designing house trailers, with as much profit as possible going into a fund for his project.

In 1951 Freed and his wife, Betty Jane, went to Spain to investigate further the chances of starting a radio ministry on the Continent. During this visit, when the subject of radio’s potential came up, a Spanish interpreter advised him that Tangier would be the best place for broadcasting into Spain and Europe. Tangier, on the north coast of Africa, was an international city separated from Spain by only 26 miles of water.

“As we stood on Moroccan soil and looked over at Spain, we realized there was freedom here to build,” Freed says, “whereas there might never be an opportunity in Spain.”⁶

On January 11, 1952, TWR got its official start under the name “International Evangelism.”

While walking through the noisy streets of Tangier one day, Freed was stopped by an American. The man’s name was Southworth,

whom Freed recognized as the owner of a broadcasting permit and station in the international section of Tangier. His proposition to Freed was direct: "I'd like to suggest," he said, "that your station be put up under my permit."⁷ Freed was reluctant at first, but after a night of soul-searching and prayer, he came to the conclusion that Southworth's proposal would hasten the day that his dream of a radio ministry would become a reality.

The arrangements called for Southworth to build the transmitters and antennas and lease the facilities to Freed. This arrangement had several advantages for Freed. First, he wouldn't have to go through the potentially drawn-out process of obtaining a government license and approval to build; second, much less cash had to be raised than would have been needed had Freed been forced to build the facilities himself, and extended payments could be arranged. At this time, Freed writes, "My mind and heart were gripped by the potential of the airwaves. It seemed that radio could move across all boundaries, over the walls, through the 'curtains' like nothing else. I thought of the world's masses of people as 'one world,' with the same basic needs of the heart. I knew that every individual had the right to be reached. . . . Our goal as believers comprising the Church of Jesus Christ was to reach people everywhere, without exception. Reaching them by radio was not just a theory either, for we knew that over there on the European continent there was the largest concentration of radio sets for the population anywhere in the world outside the United States."⁸ Radio, he saw, "could penetrate the lavish man-

sions of the nobility, and the earthen homes of the peasants and bring life to all who would take it.”⁹

Southworth’s engineers started Freed’s company out with an old 2500-watt war surplus transmitter. They added two very simple antennas. Budget for this first year was \$10,000, one hundredth of what it would be ten years later.

In the early ’50s, according to Freed, it was difficult to raise support from European Christians simply because they had no interest in gospel radio. The reason for this was that all radio in Europe at that time—with the exception of Luxembourg and Monte Carlo—was under government control. Though religious programming was included on the government stations, no independent evangelist was able to obtain broadcast time.

One of the interesting developments as programming began on TWR was the Yugoslav broadcast. Dr. Josef Horak, a high-ranking government official in the Yugoslavian Department of Economics—also president of the Yugoslavian Baptist Union and a real man of God, according to Freed—began making recordings for TWR in his Serbo-Croatian language, with his older daughter singing for the broadcast. “We discovered,” says Freed, “that even though the government is officially atheistic, there was quite a bit of religious liberty. Later, our engineers were able to go into Yugoslavia and travel around with Dr. Horak, recording local church choirs and messages by several ministers. Eventually we supplied him with his own semiprofessional tape recorder, and he did many of the messages right in his home,” says

Freed. "The tapes were then sent to us to be transmitted back to his own people in Yugoslavia through 'The Voice of Tangier' shortwave system."¹⁰ Starting small, with these few language outlets—Serbo-Croatian, Rumanian, German, Spanish and English—the work continued to grow until they were broadcasting in 24 languages. In 1956 the old transmitter was replaced with a 10,000-watt unit; soon after, a second 10,000-watter and a new tower were put into service. The original simple antenna system became more and more complex as TWR, "The Voice of Tangier," beamed specific programs to almost every country in Europe, North Africa, the Middle East and behind the Iron Curtain.

In the late 1950s, Freed made a trip to Monte Carlo to visit with officials of Radio Monte Carlo. They showed him their radio facilities perched high on a slope 2500 feet above the city. Executives and the rest of the directors of Radio Monte Carlo were receptive to Freed's idea of starting a full-time Christian station there. But at this time there was no indication that Freed would be leaving Tangier.

Shortly after his Monaco visit, Freed returned to the United States, to work toward a Ph.D. at New York University. By early 1959, when he returned to Tangier, conditions there had begun to change swiftly.

The government announced that all radio in the nation was to be nationalized by the end of 1959. "It seemed black as midnight," says Freed, "when the news first came to the staff in Tangier. Father read the notification from the government to the Wednesday afternoon prayer group. It was a

tremendous blow, but not a single person said, 'Well, I guess we'll have to go back home.' We all knew that across the Straits were all those radio sets—an estimated 80,000,000 at that time. And we knew there was no full-time Gospel radio station on the continent. So we expected that God would do something."¹¹ The earlier groundwork he had done at Monte Carlo suddenly seemed more significant. He resumed negotiations with Monte Carlo right away and by April 1959 he started laying firm plans for the franchise move.

"The station had been built during the Nazi regime as a propaganda station. It was a great, beautiful, massive, stone structure—just about completed, but without any equipment installed at war's end when the Germans went back to their own country," Freed says. "It literally made chills run up and down my spine when I thought about the Gospel going forth every day from the same structure that Adolph Hitler had designed to spread Nazi propaganda."¹²

"A number of well-known American and Western European broadcasters were interested, and contributed varying amounts to share in the cost of broadcasting with us," according to Freed. "'Back to the Bible,' 'Hour of Decision,' 'Old Fashioned Revival Hour,' 'Light and Life Hour,' 'Temple Time,' and many other established programs advanced payments in lump sums so as to help us meet the heavy obligations during the year of preparation before we actually went on the air."¹³

Though broadcasting out of Tangier continued through December 31, 1959, plans for the new

outreach had been underway since the contract for Monaco had been signed in September. According to these new plans, TWR's target areas were to be: Spain and Portugal, Britain, Scandinavia, the Soviet Union, eastern European satellite countries, central Europe, southern Europe, the Middle East and North Africa. TWR went on the air from Monte Carlo on October 16, 1960.

Tangible results were immediate. More than 18,000 letters came into the TWR office during that first year, including 800 requests for spiritual help.

The TWR leadership began looking for areas of the world in need of additional Christian witness. Their eyes fell on the Caribbean area, and they began making arrangements for a facility on Bonaire, in the Netherlands Antilles off the north coast of South America.

On October 1, 1964, the official opening of the powerful radio facility was held for Bonaire leaders. Dedication of the stations was held on February 25, 1965, at the time Princess Beatrix of the Netherlands was visiting the island. But since the previous August, the regular AM programming had already been in full swing, with response coming all the way from Canada to Tierra del Fuego, on the southernmost tip of South America. English-language programming is beamed north into North America and can be heard from coast to coast in the United States. The Spanish-language programming virtually blankets Latin America. The big shortwave transmitter began in the spring of 1965 to beam programs in many languages in every direction.

Testimonies for TWR have come from around the world. From Barbados, a young listener wrote: " 'I am ten years old and would like to learn more about Jesus. Your preaching touched my heart tonight. Thank you for opening my heart to God.' "14

A listener in Yugoslavia: " 'Your broadcasts bring much spiritual comfort. I never was able to pray as I do now. You, through your broadcasts, have touched my soul deeply. I became a different person and see a definite change in my life. Please accept my sincerest thanks.' "15

"We have been in the Soviet Union several times," says Freed, "to investigate the needs, to find out about the listening habits of the people there, and to test the radio signals we were beaming into Russia and the satellite countries. The immediate impression we gained was two-fold: (1) because of the widespread use of shortwave sets there would be no problem of an audience; and (2) people were extremely anxious to hear radio programs from the West. . . . Now six full-time and six part-time workers in Monte Carlo are producing a wide range of Russian programs."16 In addition, programs produced by the Slavic Gospel Association are beamed into the area.

Far East Broadcasting Company

FEBC, with international offices at Whittier, California, was founded by three men: Robert Bowman, John C. Broger and William J. Roberts. The three had been friends for several years but during the war had been scattered. Each was bur-

dened for the Asian people and was convinced of radio's potential for reaching these masses.

In March 1946, just back from the war, Broger sailed to the Orient to try to make arrangements for station facilities. His first stop was Shanghai, China. He negotiated there for several weeks, and what he saw in that capital city of Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist China was depressing. A pall of death hung over the city, and Communist forces of Mao Tse-tung were marching across the country. No particular progress was made in the granting of the franchise, obviously in God's will. It is interesting to observe that had a franchise been granted and construction completed by the 1949 Communist takeover, the Reds would have fallen heir to a very powerful broadcasting facility to spread their propaganda.

In 1946 Bob Bowman, who had been with the "Haven of Rest" program for about 12 years, decided it was God's will for him to make FEBC his full-time job. Bob Meyer, founder and director of the program, took a special interest in the missionary radio project, and "Haven of Rest" contributed the first \$1000 to FEBC.

From Shanghai, Broger went to the minister of communications in Manila, Philippines, to apply for a radio franchise. The interrogator asked, "Why didn't you fill in all the questions? . . . For instance, why didn't you state how you will be financed? And you didn't state the amount of power you will be using. And here is another one—you didn't give the location of the proposed transmitter site. We can't process this application unless all the questions are answered. So I guess it will

have to be denied on those grounds—unless you want to fill out new application papers.”

Broger answered, “We believe God will supply all the money through dedicated Christians to build this station and keep it on the air. We will not be receiving any money through advertising. God will supply our needs.” Then he quoted this verse of Scripture: “Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”

The government man looked puzzled, then said, “Well, I don’t understand what that kind of faith is, but if you think you can manage on that, we’ll give you a try. Now, about the power, how much?”

“Ten thousand watts,” Broger said, grabbing at the first figure that came to his mind. Then he held his breath. The government official didn’t look up, just wrote down the figure—10,000 watts. “Where will your equipment be located?” he asked. This stumped Broger, for he hadn’t been able to find suitable land at a reasonable cost, and he couldn’t give the official a location off the top of his head like he had done with the power question.

“Could I have two days on that question?” he asked.¹⁷ His request granted, he spent much time contacting real estate men trying to locate property, but prices were simply too high. Six weeks passed, and he received an answer from the minister of communications. Glancing at the letter, he realized that he had been given approval contingent upon the finding of a suitable site. But the paper contained a surprise, and a pleasant one—someone had changed the power request from 10,000 watts to “unlimited power.”

The remaining problem, of course, was that FEBC still had no land on which to build a station, nor for that matter the amount of money needed to buy any. Broger wrote a letter home during these negotiations. "Then God began to work," he wrote. "An earnest Christian businessman in Manila, hearing of our need, inquired as to the specific property requirements of FEBC. I outlined what was necessary, and he replied that he and his business partner, another Christian man, had a piece of property that might be suitable to our needs. We drove out to the land which is just seven miles from the center of Manila and located on the national highway. The regulations on distance from Manila would have ruled out this property, except that previously licensed prewar local stations were close by. Therefore, the government radio commission accepted this piece of property as valid."¹⁸ But the franchise was good only if FEBC went on the air by 8 p.m. April 14, 1948. That meant suitable studio facilities and a transmitter building had to be built with hard-to-get and expensive material, the transmitter had to be completed and checked out before being shipped from the States 7000 miles across the Pacific, missionary personnel would have to arrive to prepare the programs, and thousands of dollars would have to come in before this project could be completed.

Three days before they were to have all the equipment ready and on the air, they expected to have the transmitter ready to test. But something went wrong with one of the circuits and it had to be repaired. Broger decided to try for one more

extension of the deadline—it had already been set back to June 4. Since telephone service in postwar Manila was atrocious, Broger had to drive into the city to see the communications ministry officials personally. The station was to be on the air by 8 p.m. that night. He asked for the extension, but was turned down. Trying to call back to the station to tell the personnel they would have to go on the air that night, he found the line was dead. So he fought his way through snarled downtown traffic and over rugged roads to get back to the complex before the deadline. Just before 6 p.m., he spun up the road to the station with dust flying.

“No extra time granted,” he yelled to the men. “We’ve got to get her fired up right now!”

“But we haven’t even tested it once,” someone said. “We’ll test it on the air!” Broger returned as he ran to the console to grab a bit of programming he had prepared.¹⁹ As the entire staff began singing the hymn, “All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name,” Broger signalled to the engineer to throw the switch and the first FEBC transmitter jumped into action at 6 p.m., June 4, 1948.

“Ladies and gentlemen,” Broger said, “this is the initial broadcast of KZAS [soon changed to the current DZAS], the new ‘Call of the Orient’ station, located in Manila, Philippines. At this hour of 6:00 p.m. on June 4, 1948, the Far East Broadcasting Company lays before you the foundation for that which we believe to be the challenge of this generation—the challenge to do a work for God, the challenge of faith!”²⁰

After two hours of broadcasting, the 1000-watt transmitter shut down automatically from an over-

loaded circuit, and the station went off the air. But it didn't make any difference, because FEBC had given proof of performance and would not be in danger of losing the franchise.

As of 1970, FEBC had 21 stations on the air utilizing 22 frequencies, with 10 operating on the standard broadcasting band, 11 shortwave, and at least one frequency on each of the international bands. The smallest station uses 1000 watts of power, while the largest boasts 250,000. Several of the stations are 50,000-watters. More than 1372 program hours a week reach all of east and south Asia—where over half of the world's population lives—and all of Latin America, including Cuba. Programming is done in over 40 languages and dialects. FEBC receives about 12,000 letters each month in response to the broadcasts, with the majority coming from young people 17 to 20.

FEBC's standard band broadcasting in the Philippines is over the 10,000-watt station DZAS, its oldest station, with a big and loyal audience in the densely populated Greater Manila area. The other standard band station for the Manila area is DZFE, "Manila's Fine Music Station," which attracts a more culture-minded audience. In March 1966 it was awarded the First Annual Citizens Award of Merit presentation from the Citizens Council for Mass Media, the national radio and television organization of the Philippines. The other ten stations in the Philippines are shortwave.

FEBC operates three stations on Okinawa. KSBU broadcasts many hours of Chinese-language programming each day on the standard band with 100,000 watts of power beamed to China's main-

land, which is about 350 miles away. The island will revert to Japanese control in 1972, and there is a serious question at this time whether FEBC will be allowed to continue broadcasting from that strategic spot of land in the Pacific Ocean.

KSAB ministers to about 100,000 American servicemen and their families stationed on Okinawa, which is a stopover on the way to Vietnam. KSDX broadcasts 17 hours a day in the Japanese language to the native Ryukyans of the island.

Chinese, Indian and Malayan programs are recorded in the FEBC studios at Singapore. The facility is a joint operation of several Christian organizations dedicated to using the electronic media to proclaim the gospel of Christ. Studios in Hong Kong record Chinese-language broadcasts and answer the letters coming out of China.

The regular transmissions to Vietnam are rather complicated, with the high number of American troops in the land at this time. The Vietnamese-language broadcasts are now supplemented by several hours of transmissions to American servicemen.

KGEI, with transmitting facilities at Belmont, California, near San Francisco, sends its 250,000-watt shortwave beam across Latin America to the southernmost tip of Argentina.

Response to FEBC programming comes from all over the world, including from behind the Iron and Bamboo Curtains.

A young person writes from Shensi Province, China:

“Listening to your broadcasts has made me believe in Jesus’ virtues all the more. I hope to hear

your voice often, especially your stories which influence one so much. I have much faith in the Lord Jesus. His being crucified makes me sad. I wish to know more about the things in the Bible. . . . Through your broadcasts I have much faith in Him. I am very young and ignorant so I need guidance. . . . I live right in the heart of China, so correspondence is not convenient.”²¹

Another, from Peking, the capital of China, writes:

“May the loving Father keep us in faith always, and may He broadcast His truth by the mouths of His servants. Prayer is the greatest force in the universe, so please pray for us believers here in China. Though conditions for our worship are far from advantageous, we still love the Lord and are willing to accept persecutions in order to be the subjects of His kingdom. . . . May the Lord be with you.”²²

Other Missionary Broadcasting Ministries

Besides the giants of missionary radio—TWR, FEBC and HCJB—there are several other significant broadcasting ministries being carried out.

Powerful ELWA, located at Monrovia, Liberia, and part of the widespread work of the Sudan Interior Mission, reaches most of north, central and west Africa, with an emphasis on the primarily Islamic countries of Algeria, Mauretania, Morocco, Nigeria and Liberia.

In Eastern Africa, ETLF in Ethiopia proclaims the gospel to the eastern part of the African continent and to the Far East. Radio Cordac beams

Christian programming to Africa from Burundi, next door to the Congo in central Africa.

The Evangelical Alliance Mission (TEAM) operates stations in South Korea, the Netherlands Antilles and Peru. Team has tape recording studios in seven countries, turning out nearly 40,000 programs a year. Perhaps the most widely known TEAM station is HLKX at Seoul, Korea.

“TEAM has used radio sporadically for many years,” says TEAM Radio and Films Secretary Tom Watson, Jr., “but its first regular missionary broadcasting venture began with my own approach to South Korean President Syngman Rhee in 1952 concerning the feasibility of a license to broadcast. The license was granted in May, 1954, and HLKX went on the air December 23, 1956.”

The primary goal of the station when it went on the air was to broadcast into Communist-controlled China and Russia. Since the facilities had only a medium-wave transmitter, transmission to these outer areas was possible only at night. To use the facilities for the maximum amount of time, the station developed more and more Korean programming. Today Korean programming is aired from 5:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., followed by English-language broadcasting. In the early evening hours, Korean programming resumes, followed by Russian and Chinese transmissions deep into the night.

TEAM's other stations: Radio Victoria on the island of Aruba in the Netherlands Antilles in the Caribbean Sea, which went on the air in 1958; and Radio del Pacifico in Lima, Peru, which began broadcasting in 1960.

A second major Christian broadcasting station in Korea is HLKY at Seoul, which primarily serves the people of South Korea. About 14 percent of this station's programming is directly Christian broadcasting, including Christian music. Almost half of the total programming consists of classical music.

In addition to missionary stations, missionary radio involves many program producers. Several American broadcasts, including "Back to the Bible," "Haven of Rest," "Hour of Decision," "The Lutheran Hour," are aired by some or all the big stations like TWR, HCJB and FEBC. Some, like "Back to the Bible," use smaller, local stations around the world, to supplement coverage by the giant stations. In the Philippines, for example, "Back to the Bible" is released 485 times a week over 70 stations with response sufficient enough for the Broadcast to maintain a Philippines staff of 15 to handle correspondence. "Back to the Bible," according to a recent editorial in the *ICB Bulletin*, is "the one notable exception" among gospel broadcasters taking advantage of the wide-open doors in the Philippines for commercial broadcasting. "With excellent office facilities, a fine follow-up program and a capable staff, Back to the Bible is literally covering the nation," the article said.²³

There are also some organizations, such as Latin America Radio Evangelism (LARE) and the Slavic Gospel Association (SGA), that specialize in producing radio material for broadcast to special groups. Key broadcast thrust by LARE is the Spanish-language program featuring "Hermano

Pablo" (Brother Paul) Finkenbinder. The program is on the air 237 times a day on more than 178 stations in 21 Latin American countries. Vincent Gill of LARE says, "Statistically speaking, our correspondence from listeners—both non-Christian and Christian—indicates that we are, percentage-wise, reaching more and more of our potential listening audience, and stirring enough of them to write. One month's figures at random show 1700 letters received, 70 percent from non-Christians, and 63 percent were first-time writers."

Writing in the November 1967 issue of the *Radio Telegram*, Paul Finkenbinder said, "My recent meetings in Bolivia were the largest, most attended and brought the greatest results of any meeting ever held there. Though this was a harvest of seed sown by many missionaries over many years, it was the general testimony that this was primarily the result of our continuous radio broadcasts. Out of hundreds of people that I spoke to personally, from senators and professionals to street vendors and shoeshine boys, all were enthusiastic about meeting 'Hermano Pablo.'"²⁴

Powerful HCJB, "The Voice of the Andes," broadcasts the gospel to Ecuador and the world from the mountains overlooking Quito some 10,000 feet above sea level. With transmitters totaling more than a half-million watts of power, HCJB provides informational, cultural and spiritual programming for the citizens of Ecuador, in addition to its mighty international gospel voice. The first missionary station in the world, cofounded by Reuben Larson and Clarence Jones, HCJB has continued its pioneering in Christian

broadcasting. In 1959 it began experimental television programming, and in 1961 was granted a full television license by the government. Broadcasting four hours a night, seven nights a week, HCJB-TV televises gospel, cultural and current events, programs, including a version of "Meet the Press," featuring government leaders and journalists. Other HCJB ministries, under the auspices of its parent organization, World Radio Missionary Fellowship, include the "Bible Institute of the Air," All Ecuador Gospel Network, and HOXO, a 5000-watt station in Panama.

Another major Spanish-language ministry is "*La Hora Nazarena*" ("The Nazarene Hour"), sponsored by the Nazarene Radio League, which also produces the English-language "Showers of Blessing" program. The Spanish program, launched in 1953 over 12 stations, is now heard on about 450 stations throughout Latin America.

The Slavic Gospel Association prepares radio material in several Slavic languages for broadcasts into Iron Curtain countries of Central and Eastern Europe, Russia, and to areas in South America where Russian or other Slavic tongues are spoken.

The Rev. Andrew Semenchuk, director of the Russian Bible Institute in Buenos Aires, Argentina, visited Russia in August 1968, finding out that the SGA radio broadcasts were reaching a highly appreciative audience. "Over and over again," he reported, "people would say 'tell the (radio) staff to not be discouraged. Tell them we do listen and would write more often if we could.' They don't just turn on the radio and use it for background music. When they turn on the radio, it is a service

in their home. When a hymn is being sung, they sing along. When the Scriptures are being read, if they have a Bible, they open it and follow along. When a message is being preached, they sit quietly, and neighbors very often come to the home and they all concentrate on the message. Not thousands, but millions, of home services are being conducted as people listen.”

“Every time I have the opportunity,” wrote one Polish listener to SGA, “I hurry to the radio to listen to your program. I place the radio by the open window and turn up the volume so that the passersby may hear your broadcast. Many stop, and with great wondering listen. They are amazed that in our time from some place the message of Christ is being broadcast. As a result many listen to the programs in their own homes. I am a young man; please pray for me.”

From Russia a listener wrote: “Christ is in the midst of us. Listening to your children’s program and also to the rest of your programs, I want you to know that they strengthen us. In our country the hunger for the Word of God is beginning. We want you to know that we thank you from the depths of our hearts for bringing to our attention that which our leaders are trying to keep from us so that we would forget these things. They want us to forget all truth. May God help you to never stop reminding us of heaven. Our souls are wearied living in this wickedness. I do not have the words to express my thanks to you for your broadcasts.”

“Ours is a large family,” writes another Russian listener, “and every day there are so many cares. When evening comes and we are all tired, we look

forward to sitting down in front of the radio to hear your words of encouragement, and we are never disappointed. Your singing and your words of exhortation renew and inspire us. Greetings from our family.” Signed, “Mama, Papa, and 10 children.”

Peter Deyneka, Jr., director of SGA, says that “in reaching Russia there is much more that could be done. As well as more programs at more times, there are great possibilities for evangelization in the kinds and varieties of programs. The usual programs include a Bible message and singing. Other programs might be planned to reach other people. Children’s programs, for instance, are desperately needed as well as programs directed to high school and university students.”

In this chapter we have seen briefly the extent of missionary broadcasting being done today. Following, missionary radio leaders discuss several important questions relating to radio and how it is best used on foreign fields.

Has radio affected traditional missionary activity?

“Of course it has,” says Dr. Abe C. Van Der Puy, president of World Radio Missionary Fellowship. “I think in the most fundamental sense of the word, radio has affected traditional missionary endeavor. It has given traditional missionary effort a tremendous weapon and means to spread the gospel. I refer specifically to radio’s penetration. Until recently, in many parts of Latin America, missionaries had a very difficult time getting people to talk with them about the gospel. These

same people, however, have been willing to listen in the privacy of their homes. Radio has *not* affected missionary activity in the sense of eliminating the need for a good deal of personal evangelistic work. Radio and personal evangelism can work together beautifully on the mission field.

“People really busy in personal evangelism find over and over again that radio has gone ahead and prepared the way, like an air force in war. In fact, we find it happening many times that when personal workers are dealing with individuals about the gospel, the person being dealt with will say, ‘Oh, that means you are like those of HCJB.’ We would trust for more development along the lines of radio and personal evangelism working together.”

From a somewhat negative standpoint, Van Der Puy sees follow-up as one of the weakest areas in gospel radio. “Follow-up is the other half of broadcasting,” he says. “We have been trying to put increasing emphasis upon our correspondence follow-up and our tie-in with the local churches. This latter aspect is not an easy thing in Latin America. I believe that gospel radio should work more in the direction of joining the radio message with personal evangelism follow-up.”

“Basically, radio has greatly widened and extended the outreach of traditional missionary and pastoral endeavor,” says International Christian Broadcasters Executive Director Abe Thiessen. “A man’s effective contact was usually limited to a few hundred or perhaps a few thousand people in past years. Now, radio multiplies this beyond comprehension. Also, the broadcasts precede the

man so that the way is prepared for both the Message and the messenger. Considerable prestige or acceptance is given to a radio speaker, whether he is a missionary or national evangelist. As a rule, the radio gives him an entrée into places where he might not otherwise have been welcomed. The broadcasting ministry also opens a wide door to a follow-up ministry by literature, correspondence courses, telephone and radio rallies."

Paul Finkenbinder, referring to Latin America, where his Spanish-speaking ministries are primarily aimed, says that "radio has unquestionably opened new doors of evangelism. Past and traditional missionary endeavors have been on the basis of individual communication. The moment one enters into the realm of mass communications, traditional missionary endeavor is affected. This, of course, can be a favorable influence if the missionary takes advantage of someone else's radio ministry in his approach to individuals."

"Radio has expanded the scope and potential of traditional missionary endeavor," agrees Peter Deyneka. "Radio is a mass means of communicating the gospel. It goes where missionaries cannot and reaches people who otherwise might not respond to the more conventional approaches. In Russia, for example, radio encourages the believers, who have few other sources of edification, to be personal evangelists. And they are! In Russia every Christian is a missionary."

"Radio," according to Bob Bowman, "undoubtedly has had its effect on traditional missionary endeavor. However, at FEBC we look upon radio as a service agency to the existing

effort. Missionary radio should be more than an appendage on the side of the total missionary picture. It is my conviction that it should be a center thrust, around which other activities revolve, because of its capabilities for reaching the masses. Yet there is still a tendency on the part of some organizations to hold tenaciously to the traditional methods of the past.

“In various areas where stations are heard,” he continues, “contacts obtained through the radio are given to local missionaries in order to do personal evangelism. It has been reported to us, particularly from the Latin American field of FEBC, that the contacts obtained through our KGEI facility are in a cultural stratum which has not been reached by the missionaries heretofore. It is hoped that an even closer relationship can be worked out for the follow-up between the missionaries and the radio stations.”

“For us at TEAM,” says Tom Watson, “missionary radio works hand in hand with the other methods used on the foreign field. Where possible the radio broadcasts are related to the local church. In this way radio can produce contacts which can then be brought face to face with living Christians and into fellowship with the church. It is used often as an extension of the ministry of the local pastor. Radio is considerably dependent on the literature ministry for follow-up material. We use it in promoting interest in public meetings and enrollment in correspondence courses. I would emphasize, however, that we do not regard radio as an end in itself. It is a part of the program.

“There is always a risk,” he says, “that the missionary on the field, busy in his own ministry and concerns, will not be as alert as he should be to his role in the overall picture that includes missionary radio. I believe that more efficiency can be attained in this regard by the efforts and imaginations necessary to coordinate these activities.

“On the other hand, I doubt that the missionary will ever be removed completely from his role in making personal contacts,” Watson says. “Even where people can hear gospel broadcasts, they do not always listen. Even where they listen, they do not always ‘hear’ the message. The missionary must always be seeking them out and making sure that they have had an opportunity to grasp the meaning of the gospel and make a decision concerning their own acceptance or rejection of the message.”

“In my opinion,” says missionary radio veteran Clarence Jones, cofounder of HCJB, “any new method such as radio and TV as applied to overseas work is bound to affect the so-called traditional lines of missionary effort.

“Radio-TV evangelism goes along most fruitfully with personal evangelism. First, in promoting the concept by the broadcasters to believers that nothing takes the place of the ‘flesh-and-blood’ witness. Our personal responsibility to witness will always remain. Second, broadcasters in missions are specifically seeking to stir up and train believers in the art and science of soul winning through Bible instruction on the subject and by personal example of the broadcasters themselves. Third, the staff members of missionary radio stations go out in evangelistic work to help with Bible school

classes, national gatherings and the like, always emphasizing the challenge of personal witness.

“This whole pattern of cooperation among all types of work and workers can continue to develop naturally and blessedly under the guidance of the Lord of the Harvest. Once we lose the fear of intrusion of new and novel ideas into older and proven systems of working on the mission field, the whole area will progress more fruitfully. Some may have the unfortunate philosophy that anything new is wrong, so it behooves the newcomer with any new method to prove that it is of God’s working and not man’s and that the new method is fruitful and can be of general benefit to the Lord’s work on lasting terms.”

What effect has the transistor radio had on the mission field?

According to Bowman, the transistor radio has made encroachments into areas “where we have placed the pretuned sets. However, we are very happy for this, for the more commercial receivers that flow into the out-of-the-way areas, the greater will be the potential audience. We have found, though, that there are still many places where the pretuned radios are very important. In our own ‘PM Listening Posts’ scattered throughout the Philippines, we know that our monthly audience is between 60 and 80 thousand.”

“We are most grateful for the expansion in the use of transistor, battery-operated receivers in Ecuador and around the world,” says HCJB’s Jones. “Since we cannot—dare not—hold back

progress in any phase, we must adapt ourselves to it. At HCJB we developed our own pretuned receivers to fill a need among the poorer classes; it is cheaper to build a non-tunable radio receiver than one which can select the stations. Of course, a fix-tuned receiver does assure a captive audience. This is not entirely undesirable among a more primitive people like Andean Indians who are baffled by the mechanics of modern machinery.

“However, now that radio listeners—including some Indians—have become more sophisticated and transistor receivers are now less costly and more widely distributed, we are stopping production of our own receivers and turning our Radio Circle into an evangelistic department. It will continue to service the 12,000 sets we now have distributed in Ecuador and use every contact as an open door for evangelism. We are glad that many more people can now afford radios and [we] will seek to capitalize on teaching them how to use any receiver they possess. As the missionary serves people, he becomes ‘desirable’ to them and remains a ‘wanted’ person in the community.”

“The invention of the transistor radio has revolutionized the world of communications,” says Daniel P. Fuller, head of the Gospel Broadcasting Association. “Small in size but big in sound, these tiny boxes are turned into portable missionaries as radio stations around the world send out the Word in music and message. They sway from the necks of camels in the Middle East or blare their message from Turkish bars and from the mantels of a thousand homes in the Soviet Union. A Near East sheik recently told a reporter that he feared the

transistor radio more than any political enemy because it has suddenly opened up to his sheltered primitives a knowledge of the civilized world and all its potential."

Theodore H. Epp, Back to the Bible Broadcast founder, sees a problem facing missionary radio programming. "Too often the gospel is presented in terminology familiar to the speaker," he says. "But your missionary in the bush will tell you that the bushman does not know what the speaker is talking about. . . . Someone has said that the forgotten man of radio is the hearer.' For this reason, Dr. Epp declares, 'We have felt that it is not advisable to attempt to translate English broadcasts into the various vernacular languages. It is better to sponsor foreign-language broadcasts through existing missionary societies or missionary radio groups using nationals to reach their own people in their own language.'"²⁵ Back to the Bible sponsors broadcasts in Portuguese, Spanish, French and Italian and also has a part in 22 other foreign-language programs.

1. Schramm, *Mass Media and National Development*, p. 127.

2. Robert E. Burt, "Radio and TV: Mission Vanguard," *United Evangelical Action*, January 1966, p. 15.

3. Paul E. Freed, *Towers to Eternity* (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1968), p. 28.

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 46,47.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 47.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 50.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 54.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 55.

9. *Ibid.*

10. *Ibid.*, p. 66.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 79.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 85.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 93.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 147.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 147,148.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 150.
17. Gleason H. Ledyard, *Sky Waves* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1963), pp. 23,24.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 26.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 38.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 40.
21. Testimonies from Far East Broadcasting Company in Belmont, California.
22. *Ibid.*
23. "Periscope," *ICB Bulletin*, March 1968, p. 8.
24. *Radio Telegram*, November 1967, p. 11.
25. "Radio and TV: Mission Vanguard," p. 15.

Chapter 9

Radio—Its Potential

Man has communicated with beings on another planet. It does not matter that these beings were earthlings placed on the moon by our own technology. The point is, man's ability to communicate has now gone beyond the bounds of this earth. The communications revolution has reached into outer space.

Probably no Christmas since the first was as dramatic as Christmas Eve, 1968, when Apollo 8 astronauts read from Genesis as they circled the moon on man's first visit to an extraterrestrial body. Seven months later, 500 million people around the world watched via television—compliments of the communications satellites—as live TV transmissions from the moon showed Neil Armstrong's epic step onto the surface of the earth's fellow traveler. Men at the Manned Spacecraft Center in Houston talked with Armstrong and Bill Aldrin while the astronauts strolled along the surface of the moon, picking up lunar rocks and taking pictures of each other like the American tourists they were. And the world's citizens sat

amazed as they watched the President of the United States talking to the moon men as if they were no further from Washington, D.C., than Baltimore.

Communications in space have, of course, gone much further than the 230,000 miles to the moon. Both the United States and the Soviet Union have launched space probes to Mars and Venus; and a recent American probe sent back live television transmission of Mars as it sped 2000 miles above the red planet. Both countries' space vehicles, of course, have been guided by and perform at the command of radio impulses. There appears to be no limit to how far man can communicate by radio transmission. The Communications Age has been made possible by the computer, which launches the communications satellite, inserts the satellite into orbit, maintains the satellite in proper attitude and, if needed, updates information needed to carry out the prescribed function of the particular satellite. The communications satellites provide television and telephone hookups virtually circling the world. A football fan in New York City can watch, live, via Lani Bird satellite, the all-star Hula Bowl football game from Honolulu.

He can watch live television coverage of the funeral services of European leaders and watch the ancient investiture ceremonies for the Prince of Wales. He can telephone between continents over satellite circuits.

Historians have calculated that it took two weeks for news of the assassination of Julius Caesar in Rome to reach Alexandria, Egypt, only 1300 miles away, according to an Associated Press writer,

Sam Summerlin. "But the announcement of John F. Kennedy's death at 1:33 p.m. CST, flashed around the globe in less than five minutes. The news traveled with incredible speed. A survey conducted by the University of Chicago's National Opinion Research Center indicated that within 30 minutes of the President's being shot, 68 percent of all adult Americans knew of the event; by six hours later, fully 99.8 percent had learned the news. By coincidence, the first TV broadcast beamed across the Pacific from California to Tokyo was scheduled to take place that day. Instead of a recorded message from President Kennedy, startled Japanese viewers heard news of the assassination."¹

In an address published in the April 1970 issue of *Communications News*, Robert W. Sarnoff mentions how Franklin Roosevelt's Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, had bemoaned the effectiveness of 20th-century communications. " 'A lie gets halfway around the world before the truth can pull its trousers on,' " the venerable statesman reportedly said. "The problem is several magnitudes greater today," offered Sarnoff. Now its "all the way around the world and out to the neighboring planets."²

"The Communications Revolution has begun—and few Christians are aware of its arrival or importance," according to George N. Patterson, a free-lance journalist who served as a missionary in China for five years. "What the revolution means, in a sentence, is: Every person can now communicate with any other person on the face of the globe. All the essentials of the revolution have been

invented already. Any obstacles between the common man and the use of the devices now available are social, economic, and political, not technological David Sarnoff, chairman of the board of Radio Corporation of America, . . . has said: 'The most momentous communications advance—replete with opportunity *and* danger—will come, I believe, with the already being produced larger and more powerful satellites, accommodating as many as a dozen television channels, and thousands of telephone-voice, facsimile and computer-data channels simultaneously. These satellites will evolve into huge orbit "switchboards," automatically relating electronic signals of every kind from and to any place on earth.' And Sarnoff was talking about the next five to ten years.

"There are already plans in existence," Patterson writes, "to link up whole towns to a central communications network, which will be used eventually to bring the individual into touch with every communications development. . . . In Asia," he points out, "a miniature 'village' radio station is already being marketed that has a broadcasting range of 300 to 700 square miles, and is being sold for only \$500. It can be installed by someone who has never seen a radio station before," he writes. "These miniature radio stations are, as the name implies, ideal for village communities, and in the fast-developing, newly emerging nations of Asia—and elsewhere—their potential is enormous. The 130-watt or 250-watt sizes take up no more space than the corner of a normal-sized room or hut. . . . Thus, within a few years," concludes Patterson, "millions of people

who have never seen a train, an automobile or a telephone will—via outer space, through their country's ground station—make their first contacts with all that the world has to offer.”³

However, the current wide distribution of radios throughout the world suggests that at least one-way communication is practical. Worldwide, approximately one person in five has a radio. In this transistor age, one need not even live in an area served by electricity. One can be deep in the wildest parts of a South American jungle or sitting on the North Pole and still be able to listen to the radio. There are many superpower radio stations in the world, each of which can reach around the world. Several of these stations are owned and operated by Christians (see chapter 8). Therefore, the Church has access to virtually all people in the world who have radios or who know someone who has a radio. Powerful stations such as HCJB in Quito, TWR in Monte Carlo and Bonaire, and FEBC in the Philippines can reach around the world. There is virtually no square foot on earth that isn't reached sometime during the day by a gospel radio broadcast.

David Huntley of FEBC, quoting Edgar T. Martin, a Voice of America engineering manager, said that “ ‘mainly as a result of the transistor, the number of radios throughout the world is increasing at an average of 10 percent a year. Wherever shortwave broadcasting is popular, transistor radios capable of tuning at least some of the shortwave bands are available within a price range that an increasing number of people can afford. If the present trend continues there should be approxi-

mately 700 million radios in the world, outside the United States, by the end of the next decade. Of this total, at least 250 million should be capable of tuning shortwave broadcasts. Shortwave broadcasting is a status symbol for newly-independent countries. Among the first official acts of most countries that have achieved independence during the past decade or two . . . has been the establishment of a shortwave broadcasting service.' More than 90 countries maintain an international shortwave service.'⁴

In 1968 there were 290 million radio sets in use in America. About 70 percent of these sets were in homes, with about 25 percent in cars and 5 percent in public places. In 1922, when commercial radio was just getting under way, there were only 100,000 sets in home use across the entire country.

This rapid increase in the number of radios is by no means limited to the United States. Between 1960 and 1965 the number of radios in Africa jumped from 5 million to 12 million, a gaudy 140 percent increase. Radio sets in the Far East increased by 103 percent, from 30 million to 61 million, during the same period, while the number of sets in the Near East doubled from 11 million to 22 million. Smallest gainer among the regions of the world was Eastern Europe which showed a 30 percent gain, from 46 million to about 60 million. During the 5-year period the total number of radios overseas increased by 60 percent, from 188 million to 301 million.

There are 40 percent more radio sets in the United States than there are people. The average

American family has four radios—perhaps a clock radio by the bed to gently wake him up in the morning with soothing music; another in the kitchen so he can catch up on the news as he slurps his morning coffee and downs his toast; a third radio is in the car to provide wraparound music and chatter while he drives to and from the office (eighty-two percent of all commuters get to work by car, according to one survey, and 34 percent have the radio on all the time they're driving); and the children of the house have at least one small transistor radio they carry wherever they go, complete with earphones, plugged into what one communications expert calls the "privacy bubble." Completely wrapped up in the music and messages being beamed to their ears, teenagers wander through the house or down the street half-conscious of what's going on about them.

Quite obviously, radio has changed. As CBS Board Chairman William S. Paley has put it, "Radio has moved out of the living room into the kitchen, the bedroom, the workshop, the car, and back lawn—everywhere. It has become an all-day companion that goes every place, any place. It is a portable news ticker, a traveling music hall, a roving conversationalist, an itinerant spectator of sports."⁵

Studies have shown that 76.9 percent of all Americans over 12 listen to the radio sometime during the day, with 95.2 percent listening at least once during the week. All major market studies agree that radio reaches nine out of ten people in the United States in a single week.

One study made in the mid-1960s showed the size of the radio audience according to the time of day. It found that

- 27 million listeners were tuned in between 6 and 7 a.m.
- 40.4 million between 7 and 8 a.m.
- 42.4 million between 8 and 9 a.m.
- 31.7 to 35 million between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m.
- 23-27 million between 1 and 4 p.m.
- 33-37 million between 4 and 6 p.m.
- 13-19 million between 7 and 11 p.m.
- 10 million between 11 p.m. and midnight.⁶

What does all this mean to the Christian broadcaster? The answer is simple: the audience is out there, both in America and around the world. People are eager to hear programs, but they want to hear programs that are, above all, relevant to their lives; and they want programs that are professional in quality, for today's radio audience is a sophisticated one.

In preceding chapters we have discussed the obstacles facing the Church in its attempt to bring the good news of Jesus Christ to the 20th-century world. Earlier in this chapter we examined the extent of today's radio audience. We have seen how God has used radio in the past and what is being accomplished today. Now, as we look to the future, it is important to see just what certain leaders in Christian radio feel is radio's role in the evangelization of the world in the final 30 years of the century.

Is it worthwhile to broadcast the gospel over the radio?

“Yes,” says Paul Stevens, director of the Southern Baptist Convention’s Radio and Television Commission. “In the first place, it is just one more way in which we can reach people with Christ’s good news, and Christians are responsible for using all the tools available,” he says. More specifically, he adds that radio is no respecter of persons “as churches sometimes are. Radio can reach rich and poor alike, freely dispensing its wares to all who will listen. Both radio and TV cut across all the barriers we have erected socially for ourselves and others and reach people where they are, whatever their circumstances.”

Radio also crosses religious lines. “Radio can appeal to people who have never heard the gospel message and to others who, out of prejudice, fear or indifference, would never enter a Christian’s evangelical church,” Stevens says.

Paul Finkenbinder, director of Latin American Radio Evangelism, echoes this special aspect of radio ministries: “In Latin America we have not yet overcome all the barriers of prejudice which control most Latin Americans. The majority of Latins will not readily enter the doors of a Protestant church, but they will open the doors of their homes to a radio broadcast that is prepared especially for the non-evangelical and directed specifically at him. The majority of the Latin American people will accept the true, unadulterated gospel message, but they are afraid of the organized Protestant church.”

The most effective use of radio may be that of seed-sowing, according to Abe G. Thiessen, executive director of International Christian Broadcasters. "The gospel broadcaster does well to realize that the electronic media do not lend themselves primarily to decision-making," he says. "Their most effective use is not in the 'hard-sell' approach, but they are excellent instruments for sowing the seed. Repetition coupled with a variety of approaches makes it possible to implant the Message rather well. The electronic media—radio and television—are also excellent for cultivating the listener or viewer. They are well suited to bringing a person from where he is to the place where he can make a decision." In other words, he says, these "media are good opinion molders. Though they are not primarily reaping instruments, it is true that because of the vast outreach they do reap a considerable harvest, perhaps much greater than by many other methods. Because the harvest is great and the laborers few, the role of radio and TV is to reach the masses."

Stevens cites an example of just how effective radio and TV are in this "seed-sowing" role Thiessen mentions. "A Southern Baptist missionary entered the Dominican Republic several years ago," he recalls, "to establish an evangelistic ministry in this new field. For the first year he concentrated on radio and TV programs. He then opened the first Southern Baptist church on the island and the people flocked to it. The members of the church were first reached by radio and TV, educated and pointed to the more personal Christian influence of the church."

“I feel it is worthwhile to broadcast the gospel over the radio because it is the primary way today in which the multitudes on earth can be reached,” says FEBC cofounder Bob Bowman. “Officially there are over 540 million radios in existence in our world and many, many more [are] being built every year. By what other method could one possibly reach such vast multitudes with the message of the gospel each day? Radio reaches them in their homes, where prejudices are not as often shown as in personal contact. Radio is repetitive and comes to them day after day with the Message.”

“If we are going to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ to our generation, we will have to make more and better use of the mass media,” says Daniel Fuller. “Radio is among the most effective methods of reaching the millions now living on the earth. I believe it is worthwhile to broadcast the gospel on radio because more and more people are listening to radio. The modern electronic marvel called the transistor has greatly increased the audience for radio. As the audience grows, so must gospel radio.”

Kenneth J. Weaver, executive secretary of the innovative Mennonite Broadcasts, Inc., of Harrisonburg, Virginia, says, “We feel that communicating the gospel message is very appropriate for broadcasting by radio. The gospel message by its very character is a proclamation of good news. Radio and TV today are the media through which news is communicated. Some of it is by direct newscast, and other through the indirect approaches of interview, drama and entertainment.”

What is gospel radio's role in the overall mission of the Church?

Weaver says that the key role of radio in the mission of the Church is that of public proclamation of the Church's message to contact those who do not come in contact with the Church's conventional ministries. "All around us," he says, "there are people with whom God is working but who are unidentified to us as Christians. The radio proclamation of the Gospel allows these individuals to respond to that message and identify themselves. It is when they respond to a radio broadcast that Christians can then approach them through more traditional ministries such as counseling, literature, correspondence courses and the like. This provides an existing church with the opportunity of getting in contact with individuals lost in the mass of society around them. It is also the means of the establishment of churches in previously unchurched communities."

"I think radio is a strategic support of the total mission of the Church," says Fuller. "It hurdles language barriers, speaks tirelessly in all cultures the life-giving Message, never takes a furlough, has no difficulty with currency fluctuation or political vicissitudes, as the missionary does, and comes to the ears of its vast audience in developing countries with a note of authority and official status."

FEBC's Bowman outlines seven facets of radio's role in the Church's mission. "Gospel radio's role in the overall mission of the Church is to help build the Church around the world," he says. Radio is so important because it can accom-

plish many things in this regard, under the blessing of the Holy Spirit. According to Bowman,

1—"Radio builds the Church through conversions, the only true way in which members are added to the Church."

2—"Radio builds up the new converts in the faith."

3—"Radio shows the new converts their responsibility to witness."

4—"Radio shows them their responsibility in stewardship. This is important on the mission field, for this is the only way the Church has any chance of becoming fully indigenous."

5—"Radio instructs the new converts daily in the Word of God, thus making them stronger Christians."

6—"Radio recruits for world evangelism. In numerous cases," he says, "we have seen young Asians come to a knowledge of Christ and ultimately become marvelously used of God in their own communities and beyond, as they have caught the vision of the world's need."

7—"Radio is important because of its inherent characteristics. It has the ability to penetrate every level of society. If used properly it can be perhaps the greatest means of enlarging the Body of Christ around the world today."

"We often tend to think of personal evangelism as a face-to-face confrontation," Bowman concludes. "Yet when radio is properly handled, this is—in a very real sense of the word—a personal confrontation. The speaker is talking to one person."

In the light of the increasing obstacles facing personal evangelism, what is the potential of radio for broadcasting the gospel? Has gospel radio reached its potential?

Stevens points to an article in a leading American magazine which predicted that by the year 2000 the number of Americans living in or near cities will double. "The Christian," Stevens says, "must face the fact that this means 60 million new homes to which they must minister. . . . It is an accepted fact that electronic amplification of the gospel to these new homes is the only hope Christians have of serving them effectively in Christ's name.

"A scatteration of the population into planned cities which are self-sufficient in every way will result in changing forever the face of community religious life," Stevens says. "If radio and TV religious programs cannot be designed and produced to reach into the cracks and crevices of this new America—both inner and outer city—then our country is almost certainly lost to the kingdom of God."

With the proliferation of the high-rise apartment complexes, ministers are already facing the shutout, according to Stevens, and it will be getting a lot worse. "Some have suggested that one solution is to plant a preacher and his family in every one of these 'closed societies,' " says Stevens. But where will we get 85,000 preachers? That's the estimated number of high-rise units in existence today. And what of the suburbanite, commuting 100 to 200 miles a day on subsonic railroad trains or helicopters out to those new cities yet unborn?

Do we plant preachers out there too? If so, where will the preachers come from? Where will the money come from to build all the churches?

“Is it possible,” concludes Stevens, “that in the new type of social complex which man is building for himself—where space and time are shrinking values on a worldwide scale, where crossing oceans will take minutes, not hours, where communication will be instantaneous to everywhere—is it possible that as times change, God’s methods of reaching men will change also? Jesus walked, the circuit rider rode a horse, the present-day preacher uses a car, and the future minister of the gospel will undoubtedly be forced to rely heavily on the electronic amplification of his voice and face.”

“We know that electronic communications will play an increasingly important part in world development,” says Abe Van Der Puy. “From this we can deduce that gospel radio will also have a continuing and increasingly important role. Some things may have to change. I think we will need to put more emphasis on the development of local, national radio stations around the world. We will need to do all that is possible to train national workers in the use of radio.”

“Radio and other means of mass communications will become increasingly important tools for the Church as the population explosion and sociological changes make it more difficult for face-to-face evangelism,” Weaver says. “For many years political and geographical barriers kept individuals apart, and we used radio to reach into parts of Latin America, Spain, Russia and the vast areas of the Southwest. Today, and in the future,

however, the barriers that surround individuals living in our metropolitan areas are and will be just as real as the political and geographical barriers. For example, how do you ever contact the thousands of people who live in high-rise apartments, who do not even know one another and who, even though they are traveling with people at all times, never make personal contact? Radio is a way of reaching these people in their cars, apartments or through their own personal transistor radios."

Clarence Jones says that "increasing population along with congestion of urban areas, plus all the attendant social phenomena only increase the potential of radio and TV for gospel purposes. Communication of the gospel today," he says, "is more necessary than ever before, simply in terms of greatly increased masses to be reached. What better than radio-TV to assist the Church in the accomplishment of this God-ordained task? We cannot turn the clock back and no one should try to do so if he is at all concerned with going to *all* the world and preaching the gospel to *every* creature. Radio and TV are God's gifts to His people with which to finish the job of world evangelism in this generation. Without these magnificent tools, properly used by Holy Spirit-anointed personnel at home and overseas, I don't see how we would ever get the job done.

"In radio and TV we have weapons and vehicles of warfare equal to the task of bombarding the world with a continuous aerial barrage of the Word of God," Jones continues. "Nothing less than saturation of the atmosphere with the gospel will

offset the satanic attacks upon the Church and God's people everywhere. Yes, radio and TV will play an ever-increasing part in world evangelization—if the Church wakes up and moves into the communications picture in much stronger terms than she has done up to now.”

Bowman agrees that the electronic media are the only means of reaching the world with the Good News. “I am firmly convinced that without radio there is no possibility of world evangelization in our generation,” he says. “At the present time the population is more than 3 billion and it is projected that within the next 30 years the population will go over 6 billion. At the rate the Church is reaching this population by traditional methods, it can never be done. It is not an accident that God has allowed radio to be discovered (the principle was with Him in the beginning of creation) only in the century where the population-increase cycle has become so critical.

“Radio has certainly not reached its full potential as far as the Christian's use of it is concerned,” Bowman continues. “Now is the time when the Christian must study the vehicle more than ever before. One of the greatest catastrophes of the past was that so many Christians attempted to use radio who had not taken the time to study the medium. It is high time the Christian world begins to use the medium in a way that does not cause the world to laugh at it. I'm sure that none of us mind being laughed at by the world for the sake of the Message, but we must hang our heads in shame for the inept way radio has been used by so many Christian organizations in the past.”

“For the first time in the history of Christianity it appears *humanly* possible to evangelize the world,” writes Edward R. Dayton, director of Missions Advanced Research and Communications (MARC) Center, a division of World Vision International. “This potential lies in our using every legitimate tool at hand to get on with the task. The dangers of failure are great. Will we neglect the potential because of the risks involved? God forbid! The armor of God is available to us. Let us put it on with courage and trust, and get on with the task.”⁷

1. From an Associated Press release written by Sam Summerlin, appearing in the *Lincoln Journal* November 17, 1968.

2. Robert W. Sarnoff, “Proposal for a Global Common Market of Communications,” *Communications News*, April 1970, p. 8.

3. George N. Patterson, “The Communications Revolution and the Christian Gospel,” *Christianity Today*, November 22, 1968, pp. 3, 4.

4. David Huntley, “Transistors,” *ICB Bulletin*, September 1968, p. 7.

5. William S. Paley, “New Realities in Radio,” an address delivered before the Ninth Annual Convention, CBS Radio Affiliates Association, New York City, September 13, 1962.

6. From the Sindlinger Report, 1964.

7. Edward R. Dayton, “Does Technology Exclude the Holy Spirit?” *World Vision*, October 1968, p. 6.

CAN YOU HEAR? LISTEN!

There is a myriad of voices. Happy voices, sad voices, angry voices. All crying to be heard. But who listens?

Several decades ago, radio added its voice to the already noisy world. But who listened then? Who listens now? The people behind those happy, sad and angry voices.

That's why the Back to the Bible Broadcast joined the radio voice—people listen to radio. And listening, they can hear the gospel of Jesus Christ. YOU can become part of a voice that is heard around the world by joining Back to the Bible as a Faith Partner or as a Prayer Partner.

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